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Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/52/209 and A/C.4/52/L.9)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209) and a number of related communications.
2. **Mr. Zaki** (Egypt), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and introducing the report of the Special Committee, said that the report centred on important themes such as principles for the conduct of peacekeeping operations, mechanisms for consultations, personnel and reform issues, and a number of practical suggestions for the planning and conduct of such operations.
3. The Special Committee considered that it was essential for the United Nations to have the means to continue to maintain international peace and security through effective planning, deployment and management in current and future peacekeeping operations. Such operations should not be used as a substitute for addressing the root causes of conflict coherently and with the appropriate instruments. Consideration must be given to ways in which those efforts could continue without interruption after the termination of a peacekeeping operation.
4. On the issue of consultations involving the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, the Special Committee encouraged the rigorous, timely and systematic implementation of the current arrangements, which did not preclude consultations in other forms.
5. Bearing in mind the increasingly difficult and dangerous conditions in which peacekeeping operations were conducted, the Special Committee had requested the Secretary-General to consider the possibility of improving the method of selecting and preparing senior military commanders. On the issue of death and disability compensation, the Special Committee recommended the extension of the principle of a uniform and standardized rate of compensation to be applied to all observers and troops. It was well known that the Fifth Committee had adopted a resolution to that effect.
6. The Special Committee urged the Secretary-General to address the issue of the use of loaned and seconded personnel within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and noted that use should be made of such personnel with due regard to the importance of maintaining transparency, as well as the widest possible geographical

representation, over limited and specific periods. It was to be noted that the Secretary-General had included in his reform proposals a measure concerning the elaboration of a plan to phase out the use of gratis personnel.

7. On the issue of reform efforts, the Special Committee considered that those efforts should include the development of appropriate structures, at Headquarters and in the field, for periods of both low- and high-intensity activity in United Nations peacekeeping. The Special Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to enhance the transparency, efficiency and responsiveness of its procurement procedures. It also urged the Department to develop a coherent strategy for logistic support for peacekeeping operations. Realizing the fundamental importance of rules of engagement, the Special Committee encouraged the Secretariat to discuss those rules with prospective troop contributors before their finalization. The Special Committee also encouraged the Secretariat to brief those countries on proposed concepts of operations as they were being developed.
8. With regard to humanitarian issues, the Special Committee, while emphasizing the need to differentiate between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance, considered that peacekeeping operations could contribute to the creation of a secure environment for the effective delivery of humanitarian relief assistance. With respect to civilian police, the Committee considered that, in conducting peacekeeping operations, care should be taken to ensure that police and military tasks were clearly differentiated. It also considered that civilian police could play a major role in restoring civil order and supporting the rule of law, as well as in fostering civil reconciliation.
9. The Special Committee continued to believe that United Nations standby arrangements were a key element in improving the effectiveness and rapid-deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations. The Committee expressed concern over continuing delays in the reimbursement of troop contributors, which caused hardship to all troop- and equipment-contributing countries, especially developing countries, and adversely affected future contributions to peacekeeping operations.
10. The Special Committee recommended that the United Nations should give particular attention to strengthening the capacity of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as to mobilizing assistance, particularly logistic and financial support, for African peacekeeping contingents and the activities of OAU in that domain.

11. Finally, the Special Committee recognized that 1998 would mark the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping and recommended that the event should be commemorated by the United Nations.

12. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) briefly reviewed the activities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Currently, approximately 19,000 soldiers and civilian police officers were taking part in 15 peacekeeping operations. In 1997, two observer missions had been successfully concluded: with the help of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), civil peace had been restored there; while the group of military observers attached to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) had played a crucial role in the disarmament and demobilization of the former insurgents. The international community could take pride in the achievements of both missions.

13. The aforementioned operations were one part of United Nations peacekeeping activities. The Department was also preparing for a possible operation in Sierra Leone, and for an expansion of the existing missions in Tajikistan and Western Sahara. A great deal of work had been carried out on preparing for three operations in the Great Lakes region that had not, in the end, been deployed. The Department was working closely with regional organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts, particularly in Africa. It was also providing administrative and logistical support for political and humanitarian missions being carried out by other Secretariat departments.

14. The Department was also engaged in enhancing the international community's capacity to respond to future conflicts. One of the components of that work had to do with the activities of the Training Unit. In 1997, three simulation exercises had been carried out, in Brazil, El Salvador and Zimbabwe. The Training Unit had placed special emphasis on peacekeeping activities in Africa, where a peacekeeping seminar had been held in Ghana and a conference in Dakar. The Department was planning to convene a meeting in the near future for all Member States, specifically on enhancing Africa's peacekeeping capacity.

15. The Fifth Committee's approval of the budget for the Logistics Base at Brindisi had given a fillip to the Department's efforts to improve the efficiency of its logistic support for operations. In particular, it would make it possible to inventory the material and equipment that had accumulated there from completed missions, prepare two start-up kits containing assets and supplies required to support a 100-man mission headquarters for the first three

months of an operation, and also make more rational use of the available resources.

16. In light of the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General and Member States, the Secretariat was actively supporting the enhancement of the international community's rapid deployment capacity. Sixty-seven Member States were currently participating in the standby arrangements system. A major event in that context had been the establishment in Denmark of the planning component of the standby high readiness brigade. Also, the Secretariat had further developed plans for the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters, although those plans must be considered in the overall context of the Department's staffing requirements.

17. There had been a recent tendency in the press and elsewhere to downplay the significance of United Nations peacekeeping activities and to equate the activities of the Department with just the number of operations under way or the number of peacekeepers deployed. However, the significance of those activities obviously went well beyond the bare numbers. In that connection, he emphasized the importance of understanding the crucial role that United Nations peacekeeping activities could continue to play in the future. At times, some Member States had responded with reluctance to the prospect of deploying new operations, expressing doubts as to whether the Organization was capable of bringing them to a successful conclusion. But one wondered how was it possible not to act in the face of current conflicts, which frequently had grave implications for the stability of neighbouring States. In that context, it should be noted that the tendency towards relying on regional and subregional organizations for conflict resolution had produced beneficial results when there was a close and trusting working relationship. Unquestionably, such organizations could play a positive or even crucial role in some situations, but sometimes they faced structural, financial or planning limitations even more acute than those faced by the United Nations. Also, the parties to a conflict might question their impartiality or even, for historical or political reasons, the advisability of their involvement. Burden-sharing with regional organizations also brought new responsibilities for the international community. Nevertheless, it was clear that the new partnership afforded significant opportunities and must be enhanced, while bearing in mind that utilizing the potential of regional organizations could not be a panacea for the difficult problems facing peacekeeping.

18. It was essential for the mandates of United Nations operations to be as clear as possible and for them to be matched with adequate resources. Such operations were

instruments of enormous potential, but they must be handled with precision, understanding and appreciation.

19. In the context of his reform programme for the United Nations, the Secretary-General had sought to reinforce his Special Representatives' authority over all aspects of the United Nations presence in a country and favoured greater delegation of authority and accountability to the field. Another planned measure was the gradual phasing out of gratis personnel, with the exception of those performing specialized functions. Although that development would unquestionably be beneficial in the long term, over the short and medium term it would pose very considerable management problems. In February 1997, for example, 134 gratis military personnel had been serving within the Department, whereas it had been allocated financial resources for only 17 military posts. The Department must be provided with financial resources corresponding to its real personnel requirements. Future needs in peacekeeping could not be predicted accurately, but at the same time experience had shown that it was too late to build the Secretariat's capacity when a crisis was already erupting. The relevant United Nations bodies must do everything possible to strengthen both the Department itself and the structural foundations for future peacekeeping operations.

20. **Mr. Gambari** (Nigeria) said that, while most Member States expected the United Nations to play a leading role in international peacekeeping, some – particularly those advocating a shift to a more preventive role – would prefer to see it less involved in such operations. His delegation reaffirmed, however, that the achievement of international peace and security remained the collective goal and the *raison d'être* of the United Nations.

21. At the present stage of its history, the United Nations was undergoing a series of fundamental reforms. His delegation had always maintained that the reform of the Organization would be incomplete unless the General Assembly was strengthened. The work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should contribute to the enhancement of the General Assembly's authority. The Special Committee had the mandate to undertake a comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. His delegation welcomed the extremely useful work accomplished by the Special Committee, whose report (A/52/209) contained proposals, recommendations and conclusions concerning issues such as the guiding principles, definitions and implementation of peacekeeping operations' mandates; consultations between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council; the enhancement of the Organization's capacity for peacekeeping; and cooperation with regional

arrangements, and other matters. The Special Committee had considered practical steps to ensure that future peacekeeping operations would have a sound logistical and predictable financial basis. That was the only way to apply a coherent and integrated strategy for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts that would include preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building.

22. Experience had shown that a timely response to conflicts was crucial to the success of peacekeeping operations. His delegation had followed with interest recent initiatives by a group of countries to formulate a mechanism that could assist the United Nations in responding quickly to crises. The aim was to cut down drastically the interval between the authorization of a peacekeeping operation and its actual deployment. His delegation re-emphasized, however, its preference that consideration of all the proposals for rapid deployment should be made within the context of the existing standby arrangements. Furthermore, any project in the area of maintenance of international peace and security should enjoy as wide a geographical spread in personnel composition as possible. All Member States should have the opportunity to contribute to decisions on a matter of such importance.

23. The United Nations could not successfully carry out its peacekeeping operations, or any of its functions, without adequate financing. His delegation would therefore untiringly urge all Member States to honour their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations by paying their dues in full, on time and without conditions. As a consequence of the financial difficulties of the United Nations resulting from the failure of some Member States to pay their dues, many troop-contributing countries, including Nigeria, were owed substantial amounts of arrears in reimbursement. The situation must be corrected without any further delay.

24. While the Organization's financial situation grew increasingly worrying, the challenges of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building were laying an ever-growing burden on the United Nations. In that regard his delegation fully supported the Organization's constant search for ways to cooperate meaningfully with regional organizations. Cooperation in the West African subregion between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group in tackling the Liberian conflict had worked very well. The same spirit of cooperation prevailed in resolving the situation in Sierra Leone. Although regional organizations and other arrangements should work hand in hand with the United Nations to help resolve conflicts, the framework for such cooperation should be carefully worked out, so that any misunderstanding was avoided. The United Nations had

primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but that function was not exclusive to the Organization. The framework for cooperation should therefore take into account the fact that the United Nations remained the focal point for the maintenance of international peace and security and should consequently not be relegated to the background by any regional or multilateral arrangements. On the other hand, regional organizations or arrangements which had demonstrated enough resolve in managing particular crises and required international assistance through the United Nations deserved every encouragement. The Monitoring Group's experience in resolving the Liberian crisis was a typical example, although international financial and logistical support for that initiative had not been adequate, either during the initial stage or subsequently. It would be encouraging if, in their efforts to resolve evolving crises, regional organizations and arrangements received the necessary financial and logistical support, through the United Nations, throughout the span of a peacekeeping operation.

25. **Mr. Duval** (Canada) strongly endorsed the consensus report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209), with its proposals, recommendations and conclusions, and urged all Member States to adopt draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.9 by consensus.

26. His delegation believed that the Special Committee's deliberations had contributed to substantive progress in some areas, particularly in laying the foundation for the subsequent adoption of a uniform scale of compensation payments in cases of death or disability. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations had made encouraging progress in implementing the new Field Assets Control System, which had been developed practically on a shoestring. Positive results had been achieved by the work of the civilian police selection assistance teams in the pre-deployment evaluation of national police contingents and by the seminars for national peacekeeping trainers. The number of Member States participating in the standby arrangements system had grown. Such initiatives had contributed to an improvement in the Organization's ability to conduct peacekeeping operations. On the other hand, there had been a lack of progress in other important areas; for example, there was a continuing backlog of peacekeeping reimbursements caused by the non-payment of peacekeeping assessments.

27. In its future work the Special Committee could focus on such crucial issues as the structure and organization of the Department and ways and means of providing the necessary financial resources to underpin its operations. The Department had conducted an internal review of its organization, but there was little visible indication of any

progress so far. Furthermore, following the decision to reduce drastically the future employment of gratis personnel, Member States would be obliged to choose between funding the Department on a stable basis or witnessing the rapid disappearance of all the improved capabilities developed over the past few years.

28. The level of United Nations peacekeeping activity had declined over the past three years and no new mission had been authorized for nearly two. As a result, some had argued that "the sun had set" on United Nations peacekeeping and that such operations should be undertaken either by regional organizations or by "coalitions of the willing". Canada did not share that view. For reasons of impartiality, political management and resources, it continued to favour broad-based United Nations operations. The Organization should maintain its capability so that it could respond rapidly and effectively to any situation that might arise.

29. **Mr. Santaputra** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that United Nations peacekeeping operations were an important element in the maintenance of international peace and security. While fully supporting United Nations peacekeeping missions and considering them useful, the non-aligned countries believed that peacekeeping operations could contribute to solving conflicts, but that they could not and should not be permanent measures. Decisions to establish peacekeeping operations should be based on the principles set out in paragraphs 40, 41 and 42 of the 1997 report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209).

30. Since the spring 1997 session of the Special Committee, there had been positive developments in the field of United Nations peacekeeping, particularly with regard to the issues of loaned or gratis personnel and the rate of compensation of death and disability. The non-aligned countries welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243, requesting the Secretary-General to phase out the use of gratis personnel, and called for the implementation of that resolution in all its aspects as soon as possible. They also welcomed the progress made in establishing a fair and universal rate of death and disability compensation.

31. Despite those positive developments, many issues required further consideration and scrutiny. With regard to reimbursement of troop-contributing countries, the Non-Aligned Movement had, in its communiqué dated 25 September 1997, expressed concern at the continued borrowing of money from the peacekeeping fund to finance the regular budget, resulting in delayed payments to troop-contributing countries, especially developing countries. The

non-aligned countries attached great importance to that issue, as it adversely affected their participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

32. With regard to the financing of peacekeeping operations, he reiterated that the United Nations must be given the necessary resources to finance all mandated programmes, including peacekeeping operations. That issue had been discussed in detail in the Special Committee at its 1997 session. In that connection, the non-aligned countries fully supported the views expressed in paragraph 81 of the Special Committee's report, and reiterated their regret that certain developed countries still had not paid their contributions in full, on time and without conditions. Such a situation was unacceptable to the non-aligned countries and was unfair to other Member States.

33. With regard to procurement practices, transparency should be a key factor in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, priority should be given to procurement of goods and services of equivalent standard and price from developing countries. In that connection, the non-aligned countries welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/231, particularly the views expressed in paragraph 26 thereof, and believed that in the awarding of peacekeeping procurement contracts, preference should be given to Member States that had fulfilled their financial obligations to the Organization.

34. While attaching importance to the holding of consultations, the non-aligned countries believed that the Security Council should formally include that practice within its rules of procedure. With regard to the rapid-deployment capacity of United Nations peacekeeping operations, they recognized the need to develop such capacity, and had therefore supported the establishment of the United Nations standby arrangements system. They also supported the views outlined in paragraph 79 of the Special Committee's report and believed that any efforts to enhance United Nations peacekeeping capabilities should be based on the further development of that system. Any proposals and measures in that regard should be submitted to the Special Committee, which had a mandate to review peacekeeping operations in all their aspects.

35. At the same time, the non-aligned countries were concerned at the separate arrangements initiated by some countries, ostensibly within the standby arrangements system. On the basis of available information, it appeared that the proposal to develop a standby high-readiness brigade was based on predetermined criteria, resulted in prearranged linkages among selected participants, and introduced conditionalities regarding the time limits of participation.

That was contrary to the goal and spirit of the standby arrangements, which were open and all-inclusive, and which gave each Member of the United Nations an opportunity to indicate the level of support that it could provide and the pace at which it could do so. The standby-arrangements system was the result of serious consideration among Member States and did not impose any restrictions or predetermined requirements. Its merit lay in the fact that it afforded a multitude of options. Such options would be foreclosed if separate arrangements were arrived at within a select circle of participants, thus excluding the vast majority of United Nations Member States from participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

36. With regard to demining, he expressed concern, in the light of the recommendations contained in paragraph 65 of the Special Committee's report, at the transfer of demining activities from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He requested clarification from the Secretary-General as to how those humanitarian demining activities would be handled in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He stressed moreover, that the mine-clearance policies, practices and activities established by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should remain unaffected.

37. Peacekeeping operations were a critical component of the work of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. Member States must ensure that peacekeeping operations were established and deployed whenever the situation required and that they were as effective as possible. The countries on whose behalf he spoke reaffirmed their commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations and their willingness to cooperate with the international community in addressing the above-mentioned issues and other related matters.

38. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the transfer of demining activities to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would in no way lead to a decreased emphasis on that issue. All mandated programmes would be carried out and strengthened, and the merging within a single unit of specialists from the two Departments would undoubtedly ensure a more active role for the United Nations with regard to what might be termed the two cultures.

39. That issue often gave rise to certain misunderstandings; the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was not, as some believed, a military department, even though it had military personnel. It was somewhat paradoxical that the Chief of the Mine Clearance Unit in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was a military officer,

while the Chief of the Demining Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was a representative of a humanitarian organization. Such a combination of functions and outlooks was extremely useful, and he would do everything possible to ensure, not only that nothing was "foreclosed", but that the United Nations could enhance its activities in that field.

40. With regard to the standby high-readiness brigade, the Department was open to all initiatives and ideas and regularly concluded new agreements with ministers and ambassadors of countries wishing to officially draw up agreements with the Department. In dealing with the question of establishing the standby brigade, the Department acted with complete impartiality and responded readily to initiatives put forward in that regard by countries. Of course, that process should take place in an atmosphere of complete openness and with the broadest possible dissemination of information among all Member States. It should be also pointed out that there was no secrecy in that regard and that the Secretariat conducted the broadest possible consultations in organizing operations.

41. The Department sought to ensure maximum transparency in the procurement procedures, since it was a question of the Organization's authority, the quality of work and the possibility of saving funds. Measures would be taken to enable developing countries to participate in that process. With regard to gratis personnel, he pointed out that the reduction in the numbers of such personnel should go hand in hand with the allocation of budgetary resources for hiring the permanent staff necessary for the Department's work. If that were not done, the Department's capability would be sharply reduced, which might lead to a situation in which there would be neither gratis personnel nor additional budget allocations and, as a result, the Department would be unable to discharge its duties. In that regard, it was necessary to ensure geographical balance and, in considering the Department's budget at the beginning of the following year, to see to it that the reduction in the number of gratis personnel was accompanied by parallel efforts to create conditions enabling the Department to function normally.

42. **Mr. Al-Husseini** (Jordan) said that his delegation shared the position of the movement of non-aligned countries expressed by the representative of Thailand on their behalf. Nevertheless, he wished to emphasize several points that were of special importance to Jordan.

43. It should be pointed out that the most recent comprehensive operation had been established two years earlier and that there was a real crisis of confidence among Member States concerning United Nations peacekeeping

operations. His delegation, however, was gratified that the Organization was still studying and drawing lessons from previous operations, streamlining procedures, seeking to improve its rapid deployment capability and broadening the scope of discussions in the Special Committee. As the first Member State to have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Organization on standby arrangements, Jordan believed that the United Nations must continue to enhance its preparedness for any future contingency. He noted with satisfaction the efforts by the staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in that connection.

44. While his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 51/218 E and 51/243, it nevertheless believed that there were practical concerns which required the attention of and remedial action by the Secretariat: the inability of the United Nations to reimburse troop-contributing countries because some Member States had not paid their assessments in full and on time.

45. Although his delegation welcomed the progress made with regard to consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, it reiterated its call for the further improvement of those consultations, *inter alia*, by including the countries affected by the crises and situated in the regions concerned. Jordan also supported the statement made by the representative of Portugal on agenda item 11, that troop-contributing countries should actively participate in the early decision-making phase of the Security Council's deliberations on potential peacekeeping operations.

46. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's support for the report of the Special Committee and hoped that the Secretariat would respond speedily to the proposals, requests and recommendations put forward in it. He also wished to pay tribute to the men and women in the field who had made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of peace and welcomed the decision by the Secretariat to create the Dag Hammarskjöld medal for peacekeeping.

47. **Mr. Baltes** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union as well as the following associated countries, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that the European Union attached the greatest importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The contribution by the Union's member States constituted a third of the overall contributions to peacekeeping operations and in financial terms they covered more than 37 per cent of all expenditures for the Organization's peacemaking operations. In addition, the Union made a considerable

contribution to the conduct of operations carried out by other international organizations in accordance with mandates established by the Security Council.

48. In considering the question of peacekeeping operations, it was necessary to take account of the Organization's complicated financial situation: indebtedness relating to contributions for such operations amounted to \$1.6 billion. As of March 1997, the Organization owed \$800 million to 71 troop-contributing countries, half of which were member States of the European Union. That situation could not continue indefinitely and the European Union once again pointed out that Member States must carry out their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions.

49. The European Union noted with satisfaction the constructive work by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and believed that it would continue to be carried out in that spirit. The success of peacekeeping operations depended on the proper functioning of the mechanisms for ensuring cooperation between the civilian and military components of national and international organizations. In that connection, a comprehensive approach to the consideration, planning and implementation of both peacekeeping operations themselves and the entire range of related activities, including preventive diplomacy, the imposition of peace, peace-building, reconciliation and post-conflict recovery, was of great importance. Peacekeeping operations must have specific mandates, achievable objectives and clear command structures. The growing complexity of multifunctional operations made it necessary to enhance coordination between their various components as well as the corresponding subdivisions of the Organization. In light of the recently adopted decision of the Fifth Committee, the Department had to review its organizational structure, *inter alia*, in the field of planning, in order to make it possible to bring about a gradual reduction in the number of gratis personnel. In order to maintain the Department's operational potential, it was necessary to establish in a balanced way new posts financed by the Organization's budget.

50. The European Union attached importance to the closer involvement of countries providing troop contingents in the decision-making process in the Security Council. The holding of regular consultations between the Council and the countries concerned was of particular importance in that regard.

51. The Union supported the establishment and strengthening of the system of standby forces and the establishment of a rapid deployment headquarters at the Organization's Headquarters. It also noted with satisfaction

the plans to set up a standby high-readiness brigade, which would make it possible to strengthen significantly the Organization's potential in the field of peacekeeping.

52. The European Union was unable not to support the Fifth Committee's request that the Secretariat should develop a logistic support concept which would serve in the future as the basis for all peacekeeping operations.

53. Regional organizations and arrangements, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), could make an important contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that connection, the European Union noted the close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) with a view to strengthening the conflict prevention mechanism established by that organization. Support should also be given to the Secretary-General's proposal to enhance preparedness for conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa, particularly by widening the participation of African countries in standby planning.

54. An increasing role in peacekeeping operations was being played by civilian police, who assisted local police forces in restoring public order, upholding the rule of law and promoting civil reconciliation. That was all the more important in that modern peacekeeping operations were not confined solely to peacekeeping activities, but also included humanitarian components. In that connection, the European Union hoped that the Civilian Police Unit within the Department would be strengthened and noted with satisfaction the statement by the President of the Security Council of 14 July 1997 (S/PRST/1997/38).

55. The European Union reiterated that the training of peacekeeping personnel must be carried out by Member States themselves. At the same time, the United Nations had an important role to play in supporting that activity. The European Union called on the Training Unit to continue its efforts to promote standard training norms for peacekeeping personnel.

56. The European Union also attached the utmost importance to the safety of peacekeeping personnel. Enhancing the safety of personnel would also contribute to the formation of more favourable public perceptions of the work of the United Nations in maintaining peace. In that connection, it must be ensured that all deployed personnel underwent the necessary training and received proper equipment.

57. The European Union reaffirmed that it attached the greatest importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. The Organization must

enhance the effectiveness of its operations and strengthen its potential in that respect, while Member States had an obligation to provide the Organization with the necessary personnel and resources. The European Union would continue to work in that direction and hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

58. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the plan to reduce the number of gratis personnel should be seen in the context of the consideration of budgetary appropriations for the support account for peacekeeping operations, which would take place in spring 1998, so as to ensure a smooth transition and not undermine the Department's work. In that respect, efforts were being made to move forward as fast as possible, while taking into account the realities of the situation. A certain reduction of the number of gratis personnel had already taken place and a plan was being prepared for the interim period up to the time in spring 1998 when the consideration of the budget would begin and the establishment of posts would be proposed to replace gratis personnel, with full regard for the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

59. As to the question of strengthening the rapid deployment capacity of the Department (the Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade), there was no discrimination in that matter. The initiative had emanated from several countries, and the Department would study all initiatives in the framework of the stand-by arrangements. At the same time there was a plan for the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters on which work was currently under way. However, it had not been possible to mobilize sufficient resources. The rapidly deployable mission headquarters was open for participation by all countries and would be staffed by personnel whose posts would be financed either from voluntary or from assessed contributions. At the same time, the question should be studied within the framework of the discussion in spring 1998 on the support account for peacekeeping operations. The Department would make specific proposals in spring, taking into account the goal of reducing the numbers of gratis personnel and the need to create posts to ensure that the Department's basic functions were carried out, and the rapidly deployable mission headquarters would be part of that package of measures. That was the overall proposal, and meanwhile the Department would make every effort to ensure a smooth transition and protect the vitally important elements of the work of the Department.

60. **Mr. Qin Huasun** (China) said that over the past three years there had been a sharp reduction of United Nations peacekeeping operations in terms of their scope, personnel and expenses. Although the international community had a

clearer understanding of the limitations of those operations, they remained an irreplaceable instrument of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security. His delegation wished to share with the members of the Committee some of its observations on peacekeeping operations.

61. Observance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the principle of respect for State sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs, was not only the basis on which the Organization relied but also the starting point of peacekeeping operations. The increasingly active involvement in the settlement of internal conflicts in countries should not be used as an excuse to interfere in their internal affairs. History had shown the effectiveness of such basic principles governing peacekeeping operations as obtaining prior consent from the parties concerned, observing strict neutrality, and non-use of force except for self-defence. Those principles should be strictly observed by multinational forces acting with the authorization of the Security Council, which should strengthen supervision of their activities to prevent any act that might jeopardize the reputation of the United Nations.

62. A stable financial basis was essential to the success of any peacekeeping operation, and the withholding of peacekeeping assessments by some Member States had not only brought tremendous difficulties to the conduct of peacekeeping operations but also dampened the enthusiasm of troop-contributing countries. As peacekeeping expenses drastically decreased, there was a corresponding decline in the expenses shared by each Member State, and China called on those countries to clear their arrears rapidly, in full and without conditions. No unilateral move in that respect, or financial arrangements which discriminated against developing countries, were acceptable to the Members of the Organization, including China.

63. As had been shown by recent experience in conducting peacekeeping operations, one of the key factors for their success was an advance definition of a clear and practicable mandate. In recent years, peacekeeping forces had often had to accept new tasks which exceeded their capabilities, and that had added to the difficulties of peacekeeping operations and often created confusion for personnel in the field. Peacekeeping operations were not a panacea for all conflicts and there should be a limit to their mandate. The General Assembly should continue to consider other methods of conflict resolution such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building, beyond the category of peacekeeping operations.

64. Enhancing the rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations was important from the point of view of effectively implementing the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and keeping situations under control. His delegation supported the efforts made by the Organization to enhance stand-by arrangements, and his Government had announced its readiness to participate in such arrangements. Noting that some countries were prepared to provide other types of forces to the United Nations, he said that source diversity of peacekeeping forces was an important factor marking the unique role of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Moreover, since most of the current conflicts were taking place in developing countries, it was important to ensure full participation by those countries in peacekeeping operations. China hoped that the potential of United Nations stand-by arrangements would be fully utilized with the participation of Member States and felt that, after consultation with Member States, new measures should be introduced to strengthen the rapid deployment capacity under the auspices of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

65. His delegation appreciated the measures the Department had taken to improve the efficiency of peacekeeping operations. It welcomed the decision of the Special Committee to apply uniform death and disability compensation to personnel from developing and developed countries and hoped that the Secretariat would implement that decision at an early date. However, it noted with regret that the Department was continuing to use many gratis personnel. His delegation welcomed General Assembly resolution 51/243 on that question, had taken note of the statement by the Secretary-General that a plan would be developed to phase out the use of gratis personnel and hoped that the plan would be implemented at the earliest possible date. It also hoped that the composition of the Department would fully take into consideration the principle of equitable geographical distribution and balance between developing and developed countries.

66. His Government favoured the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter. It had noticed in particular that African regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), were playing an increasingly important role in preventing and resolving conflicts in the region. China had always attached great importance to African issues, and his Government supported the efforts of the relevant organizations and countries to resolve conflicts in the region independently. It hoped that the United Nations would provide more assistance to African countries and

organizations to enhance Africa's capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts would coordinate the assistance provided to Africa by countries and organizations from other regions.

67. Peace and development were two issues which were inextricably linked, and many conflicts in the world were, in the final analysis, caused by questions of development. The United Nations, while attaching importance to peacekeeping operations, should make greater efforts to promote development and lift developing countries out of poverty as the only way truly to prevent conflicts and secure long-term stability and peace.

68. His delegation was pleased to note that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/136, the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had expanded, which would surely enhance its authority. It was of the view that all measures to enhance the efficiency and capability of peacekeeping operations should be subject to full consideration by the Committee and should be submitted to the General Assembly so as to ensure transparent and democratic decision-making.

69. **Mr. Sounna** (Niger) said that the United Nations had been founded in the aftermath of the Second World War with a view to creating stability in international relations and strengthening the foundation for peace. The Organization had used many different methods and mechanisms for conflict prevention or resolution, including peacekeeping forces, observer missions or fact-finding missions, missions of good offices, mediators and special representatives. The recent reductions in the scale of the use of peacekeeping forces had not had an impact on the effectiveness and authority of the United Nations, which continued to enjoy the confidence of Governments. Governments were turning more often to the International Court of Justice for settlement of their disputes. Many countries, including the Niger, had ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

70. Many regional conflicts were being resolved with the support of the United Nations, in particular in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Angola and Western Sahara, where the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General was endeavouring to bring the positions of both parties closer together.

71. His Government supported the work of the United Nations in the interests of peace. It had offered its services to provide assistance in overcoming tense situations on the African continent, in particular in West Africa. Aside from good offices, the Niger had taken part in peacekeeping and

peace restoration operations. Its troop contingents had participated in the multinational force of Operation Desert Storm, in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), and also, under the auspices of OAU, in Burundi and Liberia (under the aegis of ECOWAS). The Niger was strongly in favour of political solutions based on negotiations, multilateral cooperation and direct contacts. Lasting peace and security could be ensured if the roots of the conflict were eliminated with the help of political and economic means and mechanisms intended to create favourable conditions for development.

72. **Mr. Chaturvedi** (India) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

73. The United Nations had traditionally played an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security, and peacekeeping operations had been an innovation to which it had resorted in order to promote the principles and purposes of the Charter. In line with that commitment, over the years India had been among the major troop contributors. While his delegation was firmly convinced of the need for peacekeeping, it believed that such operations could not be a substitute for sustained economic growth and development, which were the essential ingredients for durable peace.

74. India had always held that peacekeeping was non-military in character, even if military personnel were involved. Hence, peacekeeping operations must have the consent of the parties and must not intrude in the internal affairs of Governments. Moreover, they must not be a substitute for a negotiated political settlement, and their mandates must be of limited duration.

75. Current trends in peacekeeping must necessarily have an impact on theory and practice. Recently, the number of "blue helmets" had continued to decrease. In addition, the number of ad hoc peacekeeping coalitions for the settlement of disputes had grown. Yet the amounts owed to troop-contributing countries at the end of 1997 would total \$907 million, a considerably higher amount than that at the end of 1996.

76. He wondered whether the need for peacekeeping had declined or whether countries were no longer as committed to collective security within the framework of the United Nations. That could indicate a separation of the legislative and executive roles relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, with the former role belonging to the Security Council and the latter role being transferred to the aforementioned ad hoc coalitions for them

to pursue their own goals. Such fundamental concerns must be addressed by all Member States so that any action would be based on shared premises.

77. On the subject of progress made in 1997, he welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243 on the phasing out of gratis personnel and expressed the hope that the anomalous practice would cease once and for all. He also welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218 E, which contained provisions on uniform death and disability compensation for troops, and Security Council resolution 1121 (1997) instituting the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal. Each of those resolutions in its own way paid homage to those who had laid down their lives while serving the United Nations.

78. Member States must provide the United Nations with the necessary means to perform those tasks which they themselves had entrusted to it. All must therefore ensure that their assessed contributions were paid in full, on time and without preconditions. India had demonstrated its commitment not only by promptly paying its contributions in full, but by showing understanding for delays in reimbursements for troop contingents. There was a danger, however, that the financial burden resulting from long delays would force countries to reduce their support to peacekeeping operations.

79. It appeared that the phase of active involvement of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security was drawing to a close. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report on the work of the Organization, the United Nations was preparing itself to counter new transnational threats. He hoped that the Organization, when addressing organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, which posed threats to national security, economic development, democracy and sovereignty, would display the same activism as it had displayed in peacekeeping operations. His Government, for its part, would continue its commitment to international efforts in all those spheres.

80. **Mr. Abdulai** (Ghana) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

81. Ghana had begun to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in the very first years after gaining independence, and it was currently the world's ninth largest troop contributor. His delegation was therefore pleased that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had admitted Ghana as a full member in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/136. Ghana pledged to do its utmost to contribute to the work of the Special Committee.

82. His delegation was satisfied with the work of the Special Committee. In its report (A/52/209), the Special Committee not only reaffirmed the guiding principles for peacekeeping operations but also made important recommendations, some of which had been reflected in General Assembly resolutions 51/243 and 51/218 E. Ghana was grateful to the Special Committee for its contribution to resolving the thorny issues addressed in those resolutions.

83. Regrettably, the practice of borrowing from the peacekeeping account had continued unabated. Ghana shared the view on that matter expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 114 of his programme for reform (A/51/950), and hoped that the General Assembly would seriously address that question when considering the reform proposals. The practice sometimes hindered participation by small developing countries who wished to contribute their mite to the common cause of maintaining international peace and security. His delegation therefore appealed once again to those States with chronic arrears to help move United Nations reform forward by acquitting themselves of their financial obligations on time and without preconditions.

84. He drew attention to the need for transparency in the procurement of goods and services for peacekeeping operations, and urged that, when contracts for such goods and services were awarded, preference should be given to troop-contributing countries, particularly when their own personnel were concerned.

85. Ghana endorsed the concept of standby arrangements and had been one of the first countries to satisfy the conditions for full participation in that system. It hoped that the system would continue to develop and improve and that more Member States would take concrete steps towards participation in it. Through the system, the rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations could be greatly enhanced, and the Secretariat, in addressing that question, would need to consider the extent to which it could assist the developing countries participating in such operations with the logistical supplies and training necessary to improve their rapid deployment capacities in order to meet the needs of peacekeeping operations.

86. In selecting participants for United Nations missions, the Secretariat should continue to observe the principles of impartiality and objectivity, and consultations on the matter should be broad-based so that all Member States wishing to fulfil their obligations under the Charter had an equal opportunity so to do.

87. **Mr. Amin-Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Thailand. Over the past year, there had been a reduction both in the number of personnel involved in peacekeeping operations and in the size of such operations, which was attributable either to the streamlining or to changes in the political environment. His delegation considered that a reduction in the costs of peacekeeping operations provided an opportunity to allocate additional resources to addressing the problems that hampered development activities and were the root cause of many conflicts. Clearly defined rules of engagement and a code of conduct for peacekeepers, as well as the formulation of guidelines for national training, were of fundamental importance in ensuring that peacekeeping forces discharged their mandates appropriately.

88. With regard to the question of loaned or gratis personnel, his delegation welcomed the plan, contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/51/950), for phasing out the use of gratis personnel and viewed that measure as a positive step towards improving the composition of the staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Another positive development had been the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218 E, which provided for a system of self-insurance and the establishment of uniform and standardized rates for the payment of awards in cases of death or disability sustained by troops in the service of the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

89. Non-payment of contributions adversely affected various aspects of peacekeeping operations, including their effectiveness and the swift reimbursement of expenses incurred by Member States contributing troops or equipment, particularly developing countries. In that regard, the existing special scale of assessments established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973, which took account of the special responsibility of the five permanent members of the Security Council, must be observed.

90. His delegation cautiously took note of the new initiatives regarding the establishment of a mechanism for early warning and preventive deployment and a rapidly deployable mission headquarters. While the outbreak of conflicts and their destructive consequences were a source of concern to many Governments, including his own, the financial and other negative implications of such a mechanism obliged his Government to remain cautious. Moreover, it was necessary to ensure that the functioning of such mechanisms did not run counter to the principles of international law in general and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations in particular.

91. His delegation strongly supported the idea of actively involving troop-contributing countries in relevant consultations and discussions held by the Security Council. If that idea was put into practice, and if there was also greater transparency in the Council's work, States that were not members of the Council would be encouraged to step up their efforts towards maintaining peace and security.

92. It was extremely important to observe a number of principles either contained in the Charter or established on the basis of the invaluable experience gained in previous peacekeeping operations. Those principles were respect for territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty, non-use of force except in self defence, non-interference in internal affairs, impartiality and the gaining of the consent of the warring parties. Security Council resolutions establishing peacekeeping operations must include, in clear terms, their defined mandates, objectives, command structure and financing in order to ensure that efforts to achieve peaceful solutions to conflicts produced results. Finally, his delegation supported the Special Committee's recommendation to devote part of the first day of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly to a commemorative meeting to mark the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping operations.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.



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Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe)
later: Mr. Mounkhou (Vice Chairman) (Mongolia)

Contents

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (continued) (A/52/209; A/C.4/52/L.9)

1. **Mr. Owada** (Japan) said that, since the end of the cold war, the international community had witnessed a proliferation of conflicts stemming from diverse factors. Most of those conflicts took place within the borders of given States, but had military and political repercussions on neighbouring countries and could often result in refugee flows, thereby posing a threat to regional peace and security. In that new situation, United Nations peacekeeping operations were being called upon to play increasingly new and expanded roles.

2. The fact that the number of cases in which the United Nations had dispatched peacekeeping missions to areas of conflict had declined sharply in recent years was striking. The number of personnel deployed had been reduced from approximately 80,000 in 1994 to a little over 14,000 at the end of October 1997. During the previous two years, apart from the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), no new operation had been launched.

3. It was incumbent on the international community to make fuller use of that ingenious device in the hands of the United Nations and put in place arrangements for the prompt dispatch of peacekeeping operations to areas of conflict whenever such action was warranted. In addition to the usual requirements for determining what constituted justification for those measures, such as the existence of a ceasefire between the conflicting parties and the consent of the parties to the dispatch of a peacekeeping mission, a judicious judgement of the situation was required to determine whether the dispatch of a peacekeeping mission would achieve the desired goals by preventing a deterioration of the situation and whether the expected benefits were worth the cost of the operation.

4. In that regard, the delegation of Japan was gravely concerned at the recent trend in the United Nations to take an unduly sceptical attitude towards the launching of peacekeeping operations, mainly because such operations always incurred expenses at a time when the Organization was already suffering from a budget deficit. While the cost factor was an important consideration in any undertaking of the United Nations, however, it should not be the absolute yardstick by which to decide on an action which, if undertaken in a timely manner, would prevent the

development of situations that could cost the Organization and its Member States much more.

5. The Government of Japan now wished to present its views on three salient aspects of the issue, which the international community should urgently address in order to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping operations. First, reiterating the position already expressed by Japan at the 1997 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and in view of the distinctive new features of recent conflicts, especially in Africa, it was important to look at the role of peacekeeping operations in providing assistance for international activities in the humanitarian field. Providing humanitarian assistance to those in need in times of armed conflict was one of the essential activities of the United Nations. In view of the increasing need for closer coordination and cooperation between United Nations activities to provide humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping missions in situations of conflict, it was necessary for the United Nations to devise a much more comprehensive strategy to cope with conflict situations in an organic manner, covering the whole process of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building in a continuum, through cooperation among humanitarian aid agencies, peacekeeping operations and development agencies working in the field.

6. With those considerations in mind, Japan had convened an international conference on strategies for conflict prevention and management, which would take place in Tokyo in January of the following year. It was envisaged that the conference, which would focus on, *inter alia*, the current situation in Africa, would address the problem of the continuum, including the role of peacekeeping operations in that process.

7. The second point, to which Japan attached particular importance, related to the timing of the launching of peacekeeping operations. As the situation in the Republic of the Congo had recently demonstrated, it was extremely difficult to choose the proper time for launching a peacekeeping operation in a concrete situation. For that, it was necessary to make not only a strategic but also a political judgement of the first order. In addition, if the operation was to be successful, the time between the point at which the Security Council took up the question of whether to launch an operation and the point at which it was effectively launched had to be as short as possible. Seen from that perspective, the proposal for the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters and of the Multinational United Nations Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) merited appreciation and deserved to be implemented as early as possible.

8. The third point which Japan wished to make concerned coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements. It was common knowledge that regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Africa, the Organization of American States (OAS) in the Americas and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Europe, were playing an increasingly important role in the fields of regional peace and security, especially in cases where the Security Council entrusted them with certain functions in connection with a situation arising within a region. The recent efforts of ECOWAS in Sierra Leone and the activities in Central Africa of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) might serve as useful models for that type of cooperation. Japan believed that the trend towards the revitalization of the roles of regional institutions working in close cooperation with the United Nations in the field of peace and security and operating under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 53 thereof, was to be commended.

9. In recent years, the participation of the United Nations in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons had become a pressing task for the Organization and, in particular, for the Security Council, especially in the light of recent experiences in the Great Lakes region. It was of paramount importance for the principle of impartiality to be observed by United Nations peacekeeping operations as a prerequisite for the effective functioning of such operations in assisting the humanitarian activities on the ground. In that connection, the safety of personnel engaged in assistance activities had been and remained a source of major concern, as the recent examples of Tajikistan and the Great Lakes region had shown. Japan firmly believed that one of the steps which each Member State could take was to decide to become a party to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and to bring that Convention into force without delay. That, however, was not sufficient. The adoption of a legal instrument would not in itself eliminate the problem. All States should consider ways and means of strengthening the protection of such personnel in a pragmatic manner. For its part, Japan was prepared to cooperate closely with like-minded Member States in exploring further possibilities for improving the current situation in that regard.

10. **Mr. Ong** (Singapore) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on the item under consideration at the previous meeting by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned

Countries. The end of the cold war had been followed by a marked increase in United Nations peacekeeping activities. When the old bipolar structure of global politics had collapsed, historical hostilities, both within and between States, had resurfaced. Between 1988 and 1996, the United Nations had deployed 28 peacekeeping missions, two thirds of all peacekeeping operations in the history of the United Nations. The role of the participants in those operations had increased in scope and complexity.

11. In that new international climate, the major Powers had demonstrated a greater political will to use the Security Council to seek solutions to conflicts. In those attempts to utilize peacekeeping operations to achieve more ambitious objectives, the mandates for peacekeeping operations had become increasingly complex, and over the past few years it had become clear that the capacity of the United Nations in the sphere of peacekeeping was limited. There had been a sense of "peacekeeping fatigue" and an increased tendency towards greater caution in establishing mandates for peacekeeping operations. Annual United Nations peacekeeping expenditure had declined from a peak of US\$ 3.6 billion in December 1994 to US\$ 1.2 billion in 1997. Now that the euphoria at the end of the cold war had subsided, expectations of what the United Nations could accomplish had been tempered, and it was possible to take stock of the successes and failures of the past few years more realistically and chart new directions for fulfilling the objective of maintaining international peace and security laid down in the Charter.

12. Singapore remained firmly committed to the work of the United Nations. It had taken part in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Namibia, Kuwait, Angola, Cambodia and Guatemala and in the Special Mission to Afghanistan. In addition, it had contributed three gratis officers to assist the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Whenever and wherever its resources permitted, Singapore would continue to support United Nations peacekeeping activities.

13. It was clear that those activities could not be abandoned. The public image of the work of the United Nations would continue to be determined largely by the activities of the peacekeeping troops. For that reason, and in order to contribute to the Committee's deliberations on the issue, his delegation wished to highlight some of the challenges which the United Nations would face in its peacekeeping efforts in the near future.

14. First, United Nations peacekeeping operations must have clear and achievable goals. As a result of the pressure of public demands for intervention by the United Nations

and the efforts of Governments to satisfy those demands by passing resolutions in the Security Council, United Nations peacekeeping missions were being sent to places in which armed conflicts were still raging and some of the parties did not even want their presence. At the same time, disagreements within the Security Council could in practice result in ambiguities and vagueness in defining the purposes of peacekeeping operations. It could be argued that, if there was no agreement among decision makers on the goals to be pursued, peacekeeping commitments should not be made.

15. Second, closer coordination was needed between humanitarian activities and peacekeeping operations. As the number of humanitarian organizations increased, the competition among them to secure a greater share of governmental aid and public sponsorship intensified. Many humanitarian organizations had objectives which did not necessarily coincide with those of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Third, once the Security Council had taken a decision about a particular peacekeeping operation, the United Nations needed to be able to deploy its troops more quickly and establish a credible presence before a conflict worsened. In that connection, it was encouraging to note that more and more Member States were developing units which could be deployed rapidly. In May 1997, Singapore had become the seventh Member State to sign a memorandum of understanding on standby arrangements.

16. Fourth, the financial costs of mounting and maintaining the increasingly complex peacekeeping operations placed a tremendous strain on the United Nations budget. If the United Nations was to perform its peacekeeping role properly, contributions to peacekeeping must be paid in full and on time. The practice of borrowing from the peacekeeping budget to finance regular budget expenditure in order to resolve the immediate financial situation would certainly not help the cause of United Nations peacekeeping. Furthermore, delays in reimbursements to troop- and equipment-contributing countries, particularly the developing countries, could have serious long-term repercussions on the willingness of Member States to contribute to future peacekeeping operations.

17. Singapore had participated in various peacekeeping activities. In February 1997, Singapore had hosted a conference entitled "Humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping operations: debriefing and lessons". The conference was the third in a series on lessons learned in peacekeeping organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Institute of Policy Studies of Singapore, and the National Institute for Research

Advancement of Japan. The first conference in the series, held in Singapore in August 1994, had focused on the experience of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, and the second, held in Singapore in December 1995, had considered the topic "The role and functions of civilian police in peacekeeping operations".

18. **Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) said that the theory and practice of international peacekeeping should continue to be developed through the strengthening of basic and generally recognized principles such as the need for the Security Council's political guidance and control and for impartiality, the consent of the parties and clearly defined mandates. Peacekeeping operations were not an end in themselves, but an important tool for settling conflicts by political means; that function should be clearly reflected in their mandates. Consequently, those mandates should not continue indefinitely and should be adapted as the objectives of each mission were accomplished.

19. A clear distinction must be drawn between peacekeeping operations and peace-enforcement operations. The latter, which were justified in certain cases, should be limited and should be carried out only when authorized by a relevant decision of the Security Council, which must retain political and operational control of such operations. He was concerned about the tendency of some members of the international community to resort to coercive measures and military power while ignoring opportunities for political and diplomatic solutions. The United Nations should take such measures only under exceptional circumstances, once all other means had been exhausted. At the same time, force must be used in a very responsible manner so as not to endanger the safety of United Nations personnel. Operations in which force was used should have clearly defined mandates and should be conducted under the control of the Security Council. Attempts to interpret those mandates according to political circumstances or in order to effect a "creeping revision" of Security Council decisions were unacceptable.

20. Peacekeeping operations with a humanitarian component, which were becoming increasingly important, raised complex political, legal and operational problems. To avoid the "interventionist reflex" which arose in some cases, it was necessary to obtain the consent of the receiving State's Government or of the parties to a conflict. The Russian Federation supported the Security Council's efforts to ensure that the humanitarian objectives laid down in the mandates were clear, attainable and supported by adequate resources.

21. An in-depth examination of the concept of preventive deployment was necessary. It was important to agree in advance on success criteria and an exit strategy, subject to changes in the situation and to the progress made in achieving the objectives of the mandate. The personnel of preventive operations should consist mainly of military observers and the required civilian component rather than military contingents.

22. The general trend towards increasing the proportion of civilian personnel was reflected in the more active use of civilian police in peacekeeping operations. As the experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina had demonstrated, civilian police helped to build confidence and security, to prevent the escalation of conflicts and to lay the foundations for reconstruction. The respective functions of the civilian police and of military personnel should be kept separate.

23. Of particular relevance was the issue of coalition operations, in which the specifics of each situation must be carefully taken into account. Although, in many cases, United Nations peacekeeping operations were preferable to coalition operations, financial constraints justified the conduct, in some cases, of operations by the States concerned in the framework of ad hoc coalitions or multinational forces. Nevertheless, such operations must be fully consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The conduct of enforcement operations by third parties or coalitions should be subject to the approval of the Security Council and should be accountable to that body.

24. The Russian Federation was in favour of better interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII, Articles 52 and 53, of the Charter of the United Nations. Specific parameters of cooperation and a rational division of labour should be developed, without obscuring the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. Such interaction was especially important in the context of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States in settling conflicts in the Commonwealth territory, particularly in Tajikistan. However, the problem of obtaining financial support from the international community for peacekeeping efforts in the Commonwealth was still very acute; the many appeals by the Russian Federation and its Commonwealth partners had not yet met with a constructive response. Given the importance of strengthening the Organization's rapid response capacity, he supported efforts to enhance that capability and to expand its resource base; standby arrangements were the most effective means of attaining that

goal. The Russian Federation had submitted specific proposals concerning its practical input in that area, and would shortly sign a memorandum to formalize its participation in that system.

25. The Organization's financial difficulties highlighted the need to improve the cost-effectiveness of peacekeeping, for which purpose a reliable system of logistical and financial support for such operations was needed. He welcomed the initial results of the new procedure for reimbursing troop contributors. With respect to the reform of the scale of assessments, it was important to preserve the principle of the special financial responsibility of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The Organization's financial burden would be reduced if the States directly concerned played a larger role in conflict settlement, particularly by providing services to the United Nations free of charge or on preferential terms. All Member States were obligated to pay their assessments under the peacekeeping budget and, as a first step, to liquidate their existing debt. Recently, the Russian Federation had paid a total of \$60 million into the peacekeeping budget; it would make additional payments in the near future.

26. **Mr. Winn** (Myanmar) said that, although the number of peacekeeping operations had increased in the post-cold-war era, it was encouraging to note from the report of the Special Committee (A/52/209) that the establishment of new peacekeeping operations, the total number of personnel involved in them and the average size of operations had decreased. Myanmar supported peacekeeping operations aimed at the cessation of aggression against any State and the restoration of rights to such States. It was important that peacekeeping operations should be carried out in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter, especially the principles of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, as well as non-intervention in matters of domestic jurisdiction, consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence.

27. Myanmar was concerned about the serious financial constraints facing the United Nations peacekeeping operations. It must be recalled that the Member States were obligated to pay their assessments in full, on time and without conditions, according to the existing special scale of assessments established by the General Assembly. Myanmar, for its part, had always fulfilled its obligations in that regard.

28. In the context of the current efforts by the international community to strengthen the United Nations, it was crucial to maintain and improve the Organization's ability to plan,

manage and conduct peacekeeping missions. His delegation was pleased that the Secretary-General intended to continue to improve the structure and organization of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and shared the view that it was important to hold consultations between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat in order to enhance transparency and coordination, thereby contributing to greater effectiveness and success.

29. His country's involvement in peacekeeping operations dated back to 1958, when it had contributed military personnel to the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). Subsequently, it had also participated in a series of United Nations military observer groups and had maintained its support and commitment to peacekeeping operations. His Government had responded favourably to the Secretary-General's request to contribute personnel and equipment to standby arrangements. Concerning improvements to that system, his delegation believed that the effective implementation of such arrangements would significantly reduce the response time for deployment of peacekeepers in emergency situations. It also supported the enlargement of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations; the latter played an invaluable role as a forum for the discussion and further development of such operations.

30. His delegation recognized that peace and development went hand in hand. Most current conflicts were intrastate conflicts; his delegation thus welcomed the growing cooperation between regional organizations, which had a role to play in addressing those conflicts, and the United Nations. Humanitarian strategies and long-term development aims must be integrated fully into the overall peacekeeping effort which would become a major priority in the years to come.

31. **Mr. Phommahaxay** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) endorsed the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Member States must work collectively to project an image of peacekeeping operations as an accountable and effective instrument for handling conflict situations. It was therefore essential to review the whole concept of United Nations peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, to draw lessons from past experience, to strengthen existing mechanisms and to adopt new pragmatic approaches so as to safeguard the continued viability of such operations.

32. His delegation believed that peacekeeping operations should not be the preferred method of containing conflicts, and therefore, that every effort should be made to seek early resolution of problems through more frequent recourse to

Chapter VI of the Charter. In the course of enhancing peacekeeping operations, it was essential to pay particular attention to the strict observance of some of the important basic principles, namely, consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence, as well as respect for the principle of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Equally important was the need for a clearly defined mandate, objectives, command structure and secure financing, and for the duration of each mission to be clearly spelled out.

33. His delegation was gravely concerned by the financial crisis confronting the United Nations, and recalled that all Member States, developed and developing alike, must pay their assessed contributions in full and on time in accordance with the existing scale of assessment. His delegation was also concerned by questions relating to the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit and would welcome further information, since implementation of the latter encompassed many important matters regarding staffing, functions and finance. It was important to highlight the need for transparency and respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Another means of increasing the effectiveness and rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations was the further development of standby arrangements. His delegation was of the view that any efforts aimed at enhancing peacekeeping capabilities should be based on further refinement and development of that useful system, rather than on the development of new systems, since the United Nations faced serious financial constraints.

34. Finally, his delegation wished to comment on the measures regarding peacekeeping operations contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950). With respect to Action 3, intended to phase out the use of gratis personnel, his delegation supported the position of the Group of 77 and China on the need for transparency in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/243. With regard to Action 4, because of the varying circumstances prevailing in the field, it might not be possible for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to have authority over all United Nations entities in the field.

35. *Mr. Mounkhou (Mongolia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

36. **Mr. Zaqueu** (Mozambique) said that the issue before the Committee was of paramount importance to his delegation. Now that the Cold War was over and pluralistic democracy held sway, the only way to ensure lasting peace and international security was through cooperation, not

confrontation. His delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, but it would like to add some points of special concern.

37. The report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations highlighted the main achievements and concerns in that area. His delegation shared the view that preventive diplomacy and deployment could help prevent the escalation of conflicts; thus, it supported the efforts under way in the United Nations to enhance the system of standby arrangements. For that system to work effectively, the mandate of peacekeeping operations would have to be as clear as possible and be matched with available resources. There must be coordination between the various departments of the Secretariat and the components of the missions, and between the missions themselves and other organizations involved in related tasks, including humanitarian aid. The respective spheres of action of the General Assembly and the Security Council should be clear and should be respected.

38. Scepticism over the financing of peacekeeping operations must be avoided, and it was essential for Member States to pay their dues on time and without conditions. The basic guiding principles of peacekeeping operations – impartiality, consent of the parties, and non-use of force except in self-defence – must be respected. In order to guarantee the success of such operations and to promote international peace and security, it was also necessary to respect the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the latter's domestic jurisdiction. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the efforts to establish a code of conduct for peacekeepers and parties to conflicts.

39. The end of a war was no more than the beginning of a long and hard process of post-conflict peace-building which would require confidence-building measures, consolidation of democracy and economic development. The experience of Mozambique demonstrated that the political will of the parties concerned in solving their differences and creating an environment conducive to development was an important tool to guarantee the foundations of a lasting peace. The consolidation of peace and democracy must reflect common desires and aspirations to live together in harmony within diversity and tolerance. Such a course of action would facilitate the development and strengthening of a culture of peace as a fundamental tool of conflict prevention.

40. **Ms. Williams** (Jamaica) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the agenda item under consideration. Jamaica welcomed the decision taken in General Assembly resolution 51/136 to expand the membership of the Special Committee, which enabled her country to participate in its work as a member and would also enrich the debate and ensure that decisions were taken on a more informed basis. That would also lead to more openness and transparency in the work of the United Nations, which was a goal of the reform proposals.

41. Jamaica fully supported the recommendation in paragraph 51 of the report of the Special Committee (A/52/209), that the principle of a standardized rate of mission subsistence allowance should extend to death and disability compensation for all observers and troops participating in peacekeeping operations. In that regard, her delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218, as well as the Secretary-General's intention to phase out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat.

42. There was no doubt that the proposal to establish the rapidly deployable mission headquarters had proved to be somewhat controversial. In keeping with the principles of openness and transparency, Jamaica subscribed to the view that any proposals and measures to enhance the United Nations peacekeeping capacity should be submitted for consideration by the Special Committee since the rapidly deployable mission headquarters was an important complement to the existing standby arrangements system. Jamaica supported the recommendations set forth in the 1995 report of the Special Committee, and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 50/30. It should be pointed out that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries also supported that position.

43. Jamaica fully recognized that, while there was a downward trend in the number of peacekeeping operations, situations such as the one that had recently arisen in the Congo demonstrated the need for a mechanism like the rapidly deployable mission headquarters, which, in the case of the Congo, could have led to less instability. With regard to the standby high-readiness brigade, Jamaica shared the concern expressed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries regarding the apparently exclusive character of that initiative and believed that any such initiative should not undermine the ability of Member States, particularly troop-contributing countries, to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

44. The proposal of the Secretary-General to transfer demining activities from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations required further clarification, particularly in view of paragraph 65 of the 1997 report of the Special Committee (A/52/209). While Jamaica welcomed the recommendation of the Secretary-General for the use of a model status-of-forces agreement, it wished to stress the bilateral character of such an agreement, which must be negotiated and agreed to between the host Government and the United Nations. State sovereignty should be fully respected in those negotiations.

45. While her country welcomed the adoption at the current session of the General Assembly of two of the four texts considered in the Agenda for Peace discussions on coordination and sanctions, it regretted that it had not been possible to adopt the two remaining texts on preventive diplomacy and peacemaking and on post-conflict peacebuilding. In that regard, she stressed the need to bear in mind the key role of the General Assembly with regard to those activities, a position which the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries also supported. Furthermore, agreement should be reached on the definition of the term "preventive action" in order to gain a better understanding of what precisely was being contemplated.

46. There was no doubt that civilian police had played and continued to play, especially in the case of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), an increasingly positive role in restoring civil order and the power of the democratically elected Government, and assisting the national police in promoting civilian reconciliation. The people of Haiti should continue to enjoy the support of the international community in order to promote democracy and economic and social development.

47. According to the conclusions reached in numerous studies and reports on the child victims of armed conflicts, it was extremely disturbing to note that most of the children who perished in wartime died of starvation or sickness due to the destruction of medical services, water supplies and food sources. In that regard, Jamaica welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict.

48. **Mr. Zaki** (Egypt) underscored the importance of peacekeeping operations and said that, over the years, Egypt had carried out its responsibilities in that regard and hoped to continue to contribute, in accordance with its possibilities and when necessary, to the work of the Organization in that area. There was no doubt about the important role played by the United Nations in that field in accordance with the

Charter and, in that respect, his country wished to draw attention to several questions of particular importance.

49. Egypt, which was about to complete its mandate as a member of the Security Council, was concerned about the growing trend within the Council not to undertake peacekeeping operations in the conflicts that had arisen in the past two years, even though all the circumstances justifying them under the Charter had existed. Although his country recognized that peacekeeping operations had financial consequences, in the Security Council those considerations should not take precedence over the Council's role and responsibility under the Charter. Further, that tendency should not be based on a lack of political will to resolve a specific crisis.

50. In the same connection, Egypt underscored the importance of preventive diplomacy as a way of enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations in intervening before a crisis erupted. Likewise, when the United Nations decided to intervene, the peacekeeping operation must be carried out in an effective manner in order to re-establish peace and security as speedily as possible. His country supported the call to establish clearly defined mandates, objectives and command structures and ensure transparency in decision-making as well as the use of preventive deployment, provided that initiative was based on a consensus in the Organization. Egypt hoped that the consultation mechanism between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries would continue to improve.

51. Not only had the financial crisis of the Organization not been resolved, it had extended to the budget for peacekeeping operations since use was being made of loans and funds from that budget. That had led to delays in reimbursing troop-contributing countries. Egypt also underscored the need for States to pay their assessments in full and on time as well as the special responsibility in that regard of the States permanent members of the Security Council. It was also important to stress the progress made concerning the standardized rate for death and disability compensation.

52. His country took note of the initiatives of the non-African countries to help African States in the field of peacekeeping operations and hoped to be able to share its own experience in that regard. Egypt also noted the plan under way to reduce the Organization's dependence on loaned personnel. It was hoped the plan would be implemented in view of the importance of that question for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

53. **Mr. Traore** (Burkina Faso) said that the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209)

contained an exhaustive analysis of the concerns expressed by States and highlighted the need to seek new ways of limiting conflicts, thereby substantially reducing costly peacekeeping operations. His delegation supported the Special Committee's recommendation that part of the first day of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly should be dedicated to commemorating those who had served in peacekeeping operations, especially those who had lost their lives under the United Nations flag.

54. His delegation supported the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the non-aligned countries and would limit its own statement to conflict prevention. The establishment by the Organization of African Unity of a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution demonstrated its will to solve its own problems first and foremost. Other subregional and regional organizations in Africa had also launched conflict prevention and resolution initiatives, such as those taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) through its Ceasefire Monitoring Group and through the Protocol on Non-aggression and the Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence, to which a number of West African countries were parties. His delegation wished to see a genuine rapprochement between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations with regard to questions of international peace and security.

55. Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations referred to the concept of preventing situations which might lead to a breach of the peace. His delegation believed in the fundamental value of preventive diplomacy and reaffirmed its support for the principles of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-interference in countries' internal affairs.

56. The end of the cold war and the slowdown of the arms race, which had absorbed huge sums, had given the world fresh hope that the international community could calmly focus on development issues. Unfortunately, far from increasing, official development assistance, in the case of Africa, had declined considerably. His delegation believed that the foremost variable to be taken into account in conflict prevention was development, a belief which was borne out by the fact that the international community had frequently disbursed millions of dollars, through the United Nations, to stabilize conflict situations to no avail, because the development component had not been taken into account.

57. Another topic for discussion in relation to the concept of conflict prevention was education, which could not be dissociated from development either. Many normative

instruments had already defined the cardinal principles of education for peace and human rights.

58. Differences between States could lead to conflict. When conciliation, mediation and arbitration failed, a legal solution might be successful. Accordingly, the role that an international institution such as the International Court of Justice could play in preventive diplomacy should be studied.

59. **Mr. Fils-Aimé** (Haiti) said that more than 1,400 peacekeepers had died, over half of them during the past four years, defending the elderly, women and children who had been victims of violence, intolerance and xenophobia. It was fitting that the international community should pay eternal homage to those martyrs to peace, security and freedom.

60. While man was the product of history, he also had the power and the duty to change its course and bend it to his own will. The United Nations could not remain impassive when international peace and security were threatened and when civil, ethnic, cultural or religious conflicts took a turn that was universally judged unconscionable. In that context, his delegation welcomed the special emphasis placed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the concept of conflict prevention, management and resolution and called for greater cooperation between the United Nations and OAU in that area.

61. His delegation also believed that it was particularly important to develop appropriate structures, at Headquarters and in the field, to ensure proper staffing during periods of low- and high-intensity activity in peacekeeping. Somalia and the former Yugoslavia exemplified the sad outcome of peacekeeping operations where the rules of engagement were not clearly defined. However, recognition must be given to the hope, the encouragement, the atmosphere of reconciliation and the climate of peace and security which those operations had brought on numerous occasions to the populations which had been victims of conflicts. In the case of Haiti, after the *coup d'état* of 30 September 1991, the entire international community, particularly the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and Friends of the Secretary-General for Haiti, had backed the fight to restore the rule of law. However, the valiant members of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH) and the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH) deserved special praise: while the initiatives, resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council had helped to change Haiti's course and steer it towards democracy, the physical presence of United Nations personnel on the ground

had been necessary to demonstrate to those who caused the problems that the international community was firmly resolved to restore order and consolidate the Government.

62. He stressed the importance of carrying out peacekeeping operations on the basis of absolute impartiality and the consent of the parties and without using force, except in cases of self-defence, as a *sine qua non* for success.

63. In order for peace to be viable, it must be based on economic and social development and vice versa. Cooperation with Member States must be strengthened through economic and social assistance programmes in order to upgrade the standard of living of their populations. Considering the nightmarish suffering and squalor in which people lived, if the United Nations lacked long-term plans for promoting economic growth and social welfare, peacekeeping operations would have little value. An encouraging note in that connection was the Haiti 2012 initiative, sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme, which sought to promote national economic, social and institutional development.

64. **Mr. Hasmy** (Malaysia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, on the agenda item under consideration and joined with other delegations in paying tribute to those who had lost their lives in the service of the United Nations.

65. Peacekeeping operations had been scaled down over the past three years. Present conflicts were also largely intra-State in nature. Those conflicts had not only affected the nature of peacekeeping but also put a strain on the traditional multilateral framework for solving them. Nevertheless, peacekeeping operations remained an important instrument of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security. His delegation believed that scrupulous adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the basic principles of peacekeeping, such as the consent of the parties concerned, impartiality and the non-use of force except for self-defence, were essential to the success and legitimacy of such operations.

66. Drawing on the experience of recent years, Member States were now more aware of the risks associated with launching operations without sufficient resources to fulfil their mandates. The international community now had a clearer understanding not only of the continuing usefulness of peacekeeping but also of its limitations. It was important that peacekeeping operations should have clearly defined mandates, objectives and command structures. Those

mandates should include measurable objectives that would help to determine progress and the duration of the mission.

67. Malaysia supported the Secretary-General's positive orientation towards the prevention of conflicts and believed that the concept of "preventive action" outlined in his reform programme (A/51/950) should be deliberated by Member States in the General Assembly. Since adequate financial resources and support were also crucial to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, his delegation wished to reiterate that Member States should pay their dues in full, on time and without conditions so as not to undermine the effectiveness of the operations. His delegation was concerned about the delay in reimbursing troop-contributing countries, particularly developing countries, which could affect their ability to contribute to future peacekeeping operations.

68. Malaysia was also concerned about the increased dependency on gratis personnel, who hailed mainly from developed countries, thereby distorting the principle of equitable geographical distribution. According to the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209), there had been a further increase in the number of military officers on loan, despite the fact that Member States, particularly developing countries, had repeatedly called for that practice to be terminated.

69. Malaysia recognized the need for a rapid deployment capability and supported the establishment of a system of standby arrangements. However, his delegation had noted that of late certain Member States had taken an initiative to form their own standby units. It would be in the interest of all Member States if such an initiative were to be presented to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which had been mandated to consider all aspects of peacekeeping. Since most peacekeeping operations involved developing countries either as recipients or troop contributors, it was therefore essential that any discussion on peacekeeping matters should include representatives of the developing countries.

70. His delegation believed that there should be greater transparency with regard to procurement for peacekeeping operations and that the developing countries should have an equal opportunity for goods and services of equivalent standard and price from their countries, particularly those which had contributed troops to be used. His delegation also believed, all other factors being equal, that preference should be given to procurements from Member States that had fulfilled their financial obligations to the Organization.

71. **Mr. Park Soo Gil** (Republic of Korea) said that in recent years there had been a significant downsizing of

United Nations peacekeeping operations, both in terms of their number and scale. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that no new peacekeeping operation had been undertaken in the last two years. Despite that trend, and given the growing prevalence of intra-State conflicts, his delegation believed that future peacekeeping operations should be prepared for more demanding and multidimensional tasks. With that in mind, in May the Republic of Korea had organized an open debate on the issue of protecting humanitarian assistance in conflict situations.

72. His delegation hoped that the reform process would provide a healthy impetus to the ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency of peacekeeping operations. The Republic of Korea welcomed the measures proposed by the Secretary-General in his programme for reform (A/51/950), including the establishment of an Executive Committee for Peace and Security and the designation of the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point in the United Nations Secretariat for post-conflict peace-building.

73. The rapid deployment capability was another essential ingredient in strengthening the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. The Republic of Korea believed that a rapidly deployable mission headquarters should be established as soon as possible, and hoped that the principle of equitable geographical representation would be applied to the staff of that new unit. His delegation also wished to see further progress in the standby arrangements, for which the Republic of Korea had already earmarked some 800 military personnel, including engineering and medical units.

74. Another important contribution to the United Nations rapid reaction capability was the newly established Multinational Standby Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). As the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea had pointed out at the third ministerial meeting of the Friends of Rapid Deployment the previous September, SHIRBRIG and other regional initiatives would provide a valuable supplement to the United Nations Standby Arrangements System.

75. The daunting task of peacekeeping could not be carried out without adequate financial resources. The Republic of Korea noted with concern that the delay in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries had been significantly protracted, and supported the proposal that priority be given in reimbursement to those Member States that had fulfilled their financial obligations. His delegation was also pleased to inform the Committee that, to demonstrate its strong commitment both to the financial viability of the United Nations and to the Organization's function as a guardian of international peace and security, the Republic of Korea was

preparing to move gradually from Group C to Group B in its peacekeeping assessment category.

76. His Government viewed with grave concern the attacks and acts of violence against peacekeepers and associated personnel. It noted with satisfaction, therefore, the statement issued the previous March by the President of the Security Council urging host countries to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel. The Republic of Korea expected to quickly complete the domestic process required for ratifying the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. It hoped that other Member States which had not yet ratified the Convention would consider doing so, with a view to assuring its entry into force at the earliest possible date.

77. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba) said that his delegation fully supported the statement delivered at the Committee's previous session by the delegation of Thailand on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. United Nations peacekeeping operations had played a fundamental role in preventing the intensification of conflicts and in consolidating international peace. However, they could not be considered a substitute for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Peacekeeping operations could be successful only if they were carried out in strict observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly those relating to full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and of non-intervention in their internal affairs. Peacekeeping operations must be founded on the consent of the States concerned, impartiality and restriction of the use of force to cases of self-defence. It was therefore necessary before launching the operations to define clear and specific terms of reference, set realistic goals and guarantee adequate resources for their execution.

78. Cuba rejected the application of peacekeeping operations to cases of internal conflict and opposed the inclusion in their mandates of tasks which were essentially matters within the domestic jurisdiction of States, such as, for example, monitoring of elections, observation of human rights enforcement and the establishment of political or legal systems. Moreover, Cuba applauded the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to phase out the use of type II gratis personnel. The prompt implementation of that resolution would be a first step towards a lasting solution of the disturbing situation that now existed in the staffing of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It was common knowledge that the majority of so-called "loaned personnel" were from developed countries, and that many of them had been assigned to key posts in that Department. Among other

negative consequences, that situation created an imbalance that adversely affected the representation of developing countries.

79. The financing of peacekeeping operations was a collective responsibility. His delegations continued to view with concern the attitude of the major contributor, which was withholding its payments in an effort to achieve its political and other objectives. That attitude was totally incompatible with the obligations assumed under Article 17 of the United Nations Charter.

80. To put peacekeeping operations on a more financially stable basis, it was essential that the current special scale of assessments should be institutionalized. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would take that action during its current session.

81. The nature of the activities undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations required that they should be financed from the support account. Cuba was not in favour of shifting that source of funding to the regular budget. Moreover, it was essential that the United Nations should duly reimburse the countries participating in peacekeeping operations, especially those whose resources were limited.

82. The United Nations Standby Arrangements System was a basis for continuing to pursue the objective of reducing the interval between the time a decision was made to initiate a peacekeeping operation and the time the troops reached the designated site and the undertaking became operational. Although various suggestions had been made on ways to reduce needless delays in the deployment of peacekeeping operations, they could not be given effect without a careful preparatory examination by the Special Committee of their complex political, legal, practical and financial implications.

83. It was important to ensure that the demining activities carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs were not affected. His delegation had serious reservations regarding the proposal to transfer those humanitarian activities to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the question should be thoroughly reviewed before any final decision was taken. With regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations for the maintenance of international peace and security, such organizations could play an important role in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter, without detriment to the sovereign right of Member States, under Article 35 of the Charter, to bring any dispute to a universal authority, whether or not a given regional organization was dealing with the matter.

84. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the decision to expand the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and at the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/136, since those developments had led to greater transparency and trust in its deliberations. Nevertheless, Cuba was in favour of an open-ended Special Committee, in which all States Members of the Organization would have an equal opportunity to make a direct contribution to the discharge of the important mandate entrusted to the Special Committee.

85. **Mr. Al-Adgham** (Kuwait) said that, in addition to their fundamental role of reducing tension and solving conflicts, peacekeeping operations now had new functions, such as humanitarian assistance, monitoring human rights, civilian policing and reconstruction assistance, all of which were essential to the maintenance of international peace and security. While the number and cost of peacekeeping operations had declined, his delegation was of the view that their successful conduct required the clear definition of the mandates, objectives and command structures of each mission.

86. In addition, States must undertake to pay their contributions in full and on time, in accordance with the special peacekeeping scale established by the General Assembly. It was also necessary to promote ongoing coordination between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries so as to increase the effectiveness of operations at all stages. There was, as well, a need to strengthen United Nations early warning and preventive diplomacy functions. In that connection he trusted that the Secretary-General's and Special Committee's initiatives would be successful and that adequate support would be given to standby arrangements so that peacekeeping operations could attain their objectives.

87. Since 1991, the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) had been in Kuwaiti territory to supervise the ceasefire in the demilitarized zone in compliance with Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 806 (1993). His delegation was aware of the importance of UNIKOM to security in the region, which was threatened by Iraq. Accordingly, in 1993 Kuwait had decided to meet two thirds of the Mission's budget, so that the financial difficulties encountered by other operations would not affect its mandate.

88. Since then Kuwait had not only discharged its international commitments, but had defrayed the cost of peacekeeping operations beyond those commitments. In addition, since 1991, Kuwait had offered UNIKOM various services, including civilian, administrative and military

services, to help it to discharge its mandate. Kuwait had also established close dialogue and coordination with the UNIKOM command and members, and, to resolve any difficulties, had established a UNIKOM liaison office comprising members of government organs.

89. Lastly, his delegation fully supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee (A/52/209), especially those relating to the financing of peacekeeping operations and the safety and security of their personnel.

90. **Mr. Erwa** (Sudan) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the movement of Non-Aligned Countries. A clear distinction must be maintained between peacekeeping operations and other types of field operations, such as humanitarian assistance operations. Similarly, there was a need for a clear distinction between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations. It was inadmissible to mix elements of both types of operation, since that, as experience had shown, could undermine the viability of peacekeeping operations and pose a serious threat to the lives of peacekeeping personnel in the field. In that regard, the provisions of the United Nations Charter applicable to such operations must be respected.

91. The need to observe the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations regarding non-intervention in the internal affairs of States was increasingly evident. Peacekeeping operations must not serve as a pretext to undermine the sovereignty of some States and the multinational missions sent by the Security Council must take into account the basic principles established for such operations, such as consent of the parties.

92. While the United Nations Charter entrusted the Security Council with responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations must work with regional organizations. In that regard he underlined the importance of such cooperation, in particular with the Organization of African Unity, in conflict resolution and prevention in Africa. Further, he urged greater support for civilian policing in the context of peacekeeping operations, and welcomed the initiative to provide training and assistance to the units involved to enable them to discharge their functions successfully.

93. He agreed with the statement by the Secretary-General in paragraph 114 of his report on renewing the United Nations (A/51/950) regarding peacekeeping operations, since serious financial constraints had often affected the establishment and proper functioning of such operations.

Furthermore, peacekeeping accounts had had to be used to cover shortfalls in the United Nations regular budget. The result had been delays in payments to troop-contributing countries. That was an intolerable situation that could not be allowed to continue. A uniform scale of assessments should be applied to ensure greater equity.

94. Lastly, peacekeeping operations should not be used as a substitute for addressing the root causes of the conflict. Those causes should be addressed in a coherent, well-planned, coordinated and comprehensive manner with political, social, economic and developmental instruments.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.



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Summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 12 November 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Dumitriu (Vice-Chairman) (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe), Mr. Dumitriu (Romania), took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (continued) (A/52/209; A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1)

1. **Mr. Babar** (Pakistan) said that his delegation associated itself with the relevant statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and supported strengthening the role of the United Nations in preserving international peace and security. As a beneficiary of one of the oldest United Nations peacekeeping operations, namely the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), Pakistan was currently one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations, serving in 10 different missions. The fact that many Pakistani soldiers had lost their lives had not lessened Pakistan's resolve to serve the cause of peace and collective security. Pakistan welcomed the reform proposals relating to peacekeeping contained in the Secretary General's report (A/51/950), and particularly the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on preventing crises from becoming conflicts.

2. Once a peacekeeping mission had been established, it should be allowed to fulfil its mandate and should not be subjected to any artificial or arbitrary time limits. The United Nations could not wash its hands of a peacekeeping mission until it had resolved the conflict which had given rise to the relevant mandate. His delegation supported the proposal that the Department of Political Affairs should be strengthened in the fields of early warning, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building, while at the same time respecting the principle of equitable geographical distribution. However, the task of defining peacekeeping objectives, criteria and operational guidelines should remain with the General Assembly.

3. Pakistan opposed the idea that the United Nations should sub-contract the collection of vital information to governments. Such a mechanism would be discriminatory since governments would probably volunteer information in a selective manner. Pakistan continued to support the collection of information through the existing worldwide United Nations network. With regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, Pakistan believed that activities undertaken by such organizations should be strictly in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. While encouraging the

diplomatic initiatives taken by regional organizations, his delegation's preference was for international peacekeeping forces; Pakistan opposed any unilateral action by regional organizations.

4. As one of the largest troop contributors, Pakistan welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to consider measures to enhance the Organization's rapid reaction capacity. The concept of United Nations standby arrangements needed to be thoroughly examined. Pakistan believed that the initiative to set up a standby high-readiness brigade would undermine the principle of collective action by Member States. His delegation continued to support the establishment of regional logistic bases which could work alternatively as rapidly deployable mission headquarters and early warning wings. The establishment of a trust fund to finance the rapidly deployable mission headquarters was a step in the right direction.

5. The preponderance of gratis personnel in peacekeeping missions continued to be an issue of serious concern to his delegation, since their presence undermined the impartiality and international character of the United Nations. The General Assembly had adopted resolution 51/243 by consensus, requesting the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, to expeditiously phase out such personnel. Thus far the resolution had still not been implemented, although Pakistan welcomed the assurance by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that detailed modalities for phasing out such personnel were being worked out.

6. The adoption of the resolution on death and disability benefits by the Fifth Committee on 5 November 1997 was a landmark achievement and a step in the right direction. The fact that applications for reimbursement of troop costs were still pending as a result of the non-payment of assessed contributions by some Member States was a matter of concern to his delegation, and there was an urgent need for remedial action to be taken.

7. **Mr. Kandel** (Nepal) associated his delegation with the relevant statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations contained useful proposals, recommendations and conclusions for further enhancing the Organization's peacekeeping capacity. Discussions in the Special Committee in the past few years had produced many significant results such as the expansion of its membership and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218 E, which provided for a uniform system of death and disability compensation for all United Nations peacekeeping troops.

8. Nepal endorsed the reform initiatives outlined in the Secretary-General's report on renewing the United Nations (A/51/950), especially his determination to make the Department of Peacekeeping Operations more efficient, cost-effective and better managed. One of the principal ways of strengthening the Organization's capacity for peacekeeping was to improve its rapid deployment capability. Nepal, along with 66 other countries, had pledged resources to the system of standby arrangements and had been one of 11 countries to sign a memorandum of understanding on standby arrangements, under which it was prepared to deploy, at any time and upon the request of the United Nations, up to 2,000 troops and a sizeable contingent of civilian police personnel within a response time of 15 to 30 days. His delegation fully shared the belief of the Special Committee that standby arrangements were the key to the increased effectiveness and rapid deployment capacity of peacekeeping operations. Any initiative designed to enhance the organization's rapid response capacity should be based on that system and be complementary to it.

9. His delegation was concerned that the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit had not come into operation due to lack of funds, and in that context it fully supported the intention of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to seek funding for the unit from the peacekeeping support account. The establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters was essential if the United Nations was to be able to deploy a peacekeeping operation promptly as soon as it had been mandated.

10. Nepal shared the concerns of many delegations with regard to the continued use of funds earmarked for peacekeeping operations to cover the regular budget deficit. The result had been delayed reimbursement of troop and equipment costs to contributing countries, which in turn could discourage many countries from taking part in peacekeeping operations. His delegation believed that all Member States should pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions. Nepal was one of the countries whose participation in United Nations peacekeeping spanned four decades, during which time it had contributed over 30,000 troops and hundreds of civilian police personnel. Nepal had demonstrated its willingness to honour its commitments in that regard and welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1121 (1997) of 22 July 1997 which had instituted the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal as a tribute to the sacrifice of those who had lost their lives in peacekeeping operations.

11. **Mr. Perez-Otermin** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the member countries of MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), in addition to Bolivia and Chile,

said that in the past few years it had become clear that peacekeeping operations were not a panacea for solving conflicts. However, when used with caution and under appropriate political conditions, peacekeeping operations continued to be an effective instrument. Certain basic principles, such as the consent of all the parties, impartiality and the use of force in self-defence only, should be observed in such operations.

12. The member countries of MERCOSUR and its associated States had demonstrated their commitment to peacekeeping through human and material support to such operations. They were participating in 12 of the 16 peacekeeping operations currently deployed and had given particular attention to training through the establishment of separate regional training centres in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in Montevideo, Uruguay. In addition, Brazil had sponsored a seminar on peacekeeping and had organized a comprehensive computerized exercise known as "United Forces 1997". That exercise, previously held in Argentina and Uruguay, would be organized by Paraguay in 1998. In addition, there had been joint manoeuvres such as the "Southern Cross" and "Operation Ceibo" exercises. Peacekeeping had also been addressed within the context of the ongoing political dialogue between MERCOSUR and the European Union, for example at the second ministerial meeting held in the Netherlands on 7 April 1997.

13. He welcomed the statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/1996/13) which reinforced arrangements for consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries, as transparency and communication would lead to improved performance. In that context, he recalled that the Permanent Representative of Chile had written a letter dated 28 March 1990 to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/224) stressing that troop-contributing countries had a right to be heard by the Security Council. The Security Council should formalize such consultations by reflecting them in its rules of procedure.

14. While the preventive role of peacekeeping operations continued to be studied, the effectiveness of such operations had already been seen in the case of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). Nevertheless, preventive deployment should always be preceded by preventive diplomacy, since the latter, together with certain actions in the social and economic spheres, could also prevent the escalation of conflicts.

15. He supported the new post-conflict peace-building operations in which member countries of MERCOSUR and its associated countries were also participating. The Security

Council could still play a significant and useful role in cases where, once a peacekeeping operation had been concluded, its police component was given a stabilizing mandate. His delegation supported the growing role of civilian police observers and welcomed the initiative to establish civilian police selection assistance teams.

16. One of the greatest challenges facing the United Nations was how to improve its ability to react to maintain the peace. His delegation supported refinements in the structure of the standby arrangements since that would contribute towards that goal. The establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit would strengthen those agreements and would facilitate equal participation of officers from both developing and developed countries.

17. All death or disability claims for peacekeeping troops must be paid, unless it was established that there had been negligence or misconduct. In that context, the MERCOSUR countries welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/218, which was a step in the right direction in establishing fair standards for all. However, the continued borrowing from the peacekeeping budget for the regular budget was a cause for concern, as were the delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries, especially the developing countries. Member States must pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions, so as not to undermine the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. The special responsibility of Permanent Members of the Security Council must also be borne in mind.

18. **Mr. Tasovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that, while in the past three years United Nations peacekeeping operations had been scaled down and their personnel, expenses and scope reduced, his delegation agreed that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lay with the United Nations and that peacekeeping continued to be one of the key instruments available to the United Nations in discharging that responsibility.

19. All Member States had an obligation to pay their assessments for the peacekeeping budget on time, in full and without conditions, since failure to do so could jeopardize the effectiveness of such operations. However, the developing countries and the countries with transition economies had a limited capacity to contribute. He stressed the importance of strict observance, in the context of peacekeeping operations, the principles and purposes of the Charter, in particular the principles of sovereignty, territorial

integrity and political independence of States, as well as non-interference in their internal affairs.

20. Given the complexity of peacekeeping operations, consultations between the troop-contributing countries and the Security Council were essential, and his delegation welcomed the strengthening of that process. It also supported the further development of the system of standby arrangements as a very important element for increasing the deployment capacity for peacekeeping operations. The Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) would substantially increase the United Nations peacekeeping abilities.

21. His delegation would like to stress the valuable role of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in maintaining the peace in the southern Balkans. The security environment in the region since the Dayton Accords remained exceptionally fragile, but the presence of UNPREDEP remained an essential stabilizing factor. For that reason, his Government had requested the extension of the current mandate of UNPREDEP for a period of 12 months beginning 30 November 1997.

22. **Mr. Macedo** (Mexico) said that over the past year the number and scale of peacekeeping operations had diminished, which would be excellent news if it meant that the level of conflict in the world had also diminished. Regrettably, tensions, outbursts of violence, civil wars and ethnic rivalries continued to occur in many parts of the world, but the United Nations was relying on various mechanisms to mitigate or attempt to resolve such disputes.

23. His Government was especially concerned by the use of the so-called "ad hoc coalitions of willing Member States", an institution which supposedly was supported by Chapter VII of the Charter. It was particularly paradoxical that, in paragraph 107 of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), the Secretary-General himself after acknowledging the United Nations impotence, should seek to justify that mechanism. The authorization by the Security Council, which supposedly gave such arrangements legitimacy was based on a flexible interpretation of Chapter VII, whose application, as a general rule, should be the exception. Often in the quest for efficiency, there had been a tendency to ignore legal rigour and to take the easy road; that could have dangerous consequences for the legitimacy of the Organization's work in the fundamental area of the maintenance of international peace and security. His Government urged the international community to abandon that path.

24. For reasons of efficiency, the United Nations was placing increasing reliance on regional organizations to undertake peacekeeping operations. While such cooperation had at times been beneficial and even critical to the settlement of disputes, as in the case of Africa, where regional and subregional organizations had competence in the field of settlement of disputes, it would be impossible to apply a similar mechanism in Latin America, since that region's institutions lacked the legal capacity for that purpose. Mexico was of the view that recourse to regional organizations was not a panacea for the difficult problems of peacekeeping. Moreover, it was essential to bear in mind the primacy of the United Nations in that field, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

25. As a member from the outset of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Mexico could appreciate how the contribution of its new members had enriched the Special Committee's deliberations during the year, thereby undoubtedly strengthening the spirit of democracy and openness which should characterize the United Nations. It hoped that the Special Committee would very soon attain universal membership.

26. **Mr. Rider** (New Zealand) said that for many countries the 1997 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had a special significance. New Zealand was just one of the many past and current troop contributors which for the first time were able to participate in the Special Committee as full members. The new expanded Special Committee would enrich the deliberations on ways to improve the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations.

27. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations was still labouring with insufficient permanent staff, despite the Secretary-General's repeated proposals for extra resources. While the Department required qualified staff to carry out its mandated activities, the possibility must be kept open of seeking voluntary contributions of specialized personnel from Governments on a temporary and exceptional basis. In order to establish effective operations on the ground, the Secretariat needed to receive clear and achievable instructions from the Security Council, which would be helped in part if the Council and troop contributors received military advice before action on a mission was taken. Given the multi-dimensional requirements of modern peacekeeping operations, the views of not only the Secretariat, Council members and troop contributors but also of the major providers of mutual assistance must be taken into account so as to avoid duplication of effort and expense.

28. With regard to the standby arrangement system, emphasis should be placed on initiatives aimed at enhancing

the capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations to react rapidly in response to crisis situations. For those reasons, New Zealand supported the establishment of rapidly deployable mission headquarters and remained ready to contribute personnel, if requested. New Zealand also agreed that there was need to broaden and refine the concept of a standby arrangement system.

29. On the question of finances, the level of unpaid peacekeeping assessments continued to rise. The debt was being funded mainly through delaying reimbursements to troop contributors, which would be owed \$907 million by the end of 1997. That intolerable situation undermined not only the Organization's ability to implement its mandates but also the support of Member States for peacekeeping operations. New Zealand was of the view that the General Assembly should take steps similar to those provided for in General Assembly resolution 51/12 in order to highlight the consequences of continuing failure on the part of Member States to meet their legally binding obligations to pay assessments in full and on time.

30. New Zealand had been calling for greater rationalization of the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other United Nations agencies responsible for mine clearance and fully supported the Special Committee's call for a more coordinated approach. The fact that the Secretary-General had entrusted the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the overall responsibility for demining efforts provided an opportunity to put in place structures and a mode of operation that met both the needs of demining in the context of peacekeeping operations and the challenge of humanitarian demining.

31. While the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was well placed to carry out a number of core functions in support of demining operations, the real work of removing land mines, increasing awareness of the danger of mines and developing indigenous capacities would be carried out by other United Nations agencies, mainly the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services, drawing on the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance. Since the Secretary-General had given management of that Fund to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, regular contributors to the Fund, like New Zealand, would want to see in place efficient methods for its disbursement. The time had now come for the Mine Action Centre to be funded from the regular budget, with Trust Fund contributions being used for mine clearance and assistance to victims and not to subsidize Secretariat staffing.

32. New Zealand remained a strong believer in the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. The Organization was actively running or finalizing a number of peacekeeping missions and at the same time following the progress of multinational "coalitions of the willing" authorized by the Security Council, which represented a significant level of activity that was unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future.

33. **Mr. Sai** (Algeria) supported the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the issue as stated by the representative of Thailand, and recalled that in 1998 the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations peacekeeping operation would be celebrated.

34. The recent trend at the United Nations had been towards giving regional organizations an important role in peacekeeping operations, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had established a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in which various countries, including Algeria, participated. Under the auspices of OAU, that mechanism had helped to resolve some conflicts in Africa. However, experience had demonstrated that political will alone was not enough to carry out a peacekeeping operation successfully, since it was also crucial to have financial resources.

35. OAU had repeatedly requested greater cooperation from the entire international community with respect to the mechanism for conflict resolution in Africa. All those countries that desired to do so should cooperate, through the provision of either funds, equipment or other types of assistance, in order to strengthen that mechanism for maintaining peace and security in the region.

36. While the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209) dealt with many issues, in many cases it revealed a lack of consensus. What was important was that the report highlighted the general principles for peacekeeping operations and contained useful recommendations on that issue. He welcomed the report's treatment of the issue of compensation for those who lost their lives in peacekeeping operations; such compensation should be uniform. He also welcomed the decision to phase out the use of gratis personnel and to enhance consultations between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and countries in which peacekeeping operations were conducted. For many reasons, those two categories of countries had the right to participate in discussions, and his country belonged to both categories.

37. **Mr. Effendi** (Indonesia) said that peacekeeping operations should be carried out in accordance with the

principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the political independence of States, non-intervention in matters of domestic jurisdiction, consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence.

38. The experience of recent years could be used to take stock of achievements and setbacks in order to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations for future peacekeeping activities. The successful implementation of such activities depended not only on the collective will of Member States and on clearly defined mandates and command structures, but also on secure financing. Therefore, all Member States should pay their assessments on time, in full and without conditions.

39. Indonesia supported the standby arrangements system designed to enhance the rapid deployment capacity of operations. It was important to ensure that any discussions on enhancing rapid deployment should be carried out in a transparent manner and should be open to all Member States. With respect to the issue of gratis personnel, his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/243, which called for the phasing out of such personnel. The composition of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. It was also important that the General Assembly had decided to adopt a uniform system of death and disability compensation.

40. Rules of engagement were of fundamental importance in ensuring that peacekeeping troops discharged their mandates effectively, and were vital to the success of operations. In that regard, it would be beneficial for the Secretariat to hold discussions with troop-contributing countries on the rules of engagement prior to the finalization of such rules. Moreover, his delegation wished to reiterate the central role of the United Nations in providing training for military operations as well as for civilian police. Finally, his delegation supported the holding, on the first day of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, of a commemorative meeting for all those who had lost their lives during the past 50 years while serving under the banner of the United Nations.

41. **Mr. Hong Je Ryong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the expansion of the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had ensured a wider participation of Member States, particularly the developing countries, and more detailed discussions on all aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The guidelines for such operations had been reaffirmed, and the

issues of financing, reimbursement of troop-contributing countries, standby arrangements and the rapidly deployable mission headquarters had been thoroughly discussed.

42. The selfish policies of some States, which had taken advantage of the turmoil created by the end of the cold war to expand their political influence over other countries, had aggravated disputes and conflicts throughout the world, threatening global peace and stability. Against that backdrop, Member States were paying increasing attention to the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. However, although such operations were necessary to maintaining international peace and security, it was even more important to eliminate the root causes of conflicts – the policies of confrontation, domination and hegemony – that were still widespread in the world.

43. The main goal of the United Nations should be to prevent disputes. When a peacekeeping operation was inevitably needed, the role of the Security Council should be enhanced and it must be ensured that the position of its members was impartial and just in order to resolve the dispute in the interest of the parties involved. To that end, consultations should be held with all the Member States concerned before deciding to undertake a peacekeeping operation, and well-defined mandates and time-frames should be established.

44. Peacekeeping operations should strictly observe the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence of States and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Moreover, they should be impartial and be undertaken with the consent of the parties concerned. Moreover, deliberations on all issues relating to peacekeeping operations such as the improvement of the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations, the establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters and the use of the Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) should be transparent and open.

45. Certain countries had abused United Nations activities for the maintenance of international peace and security for their own political purposes. For example, during the Korean war, the United States of America had forced the Security Council to adopt a resolution calling for the mobilization of international armed forces and had established a “United Nations Command” at its disposal. No resolution adopted by the Security Council with regard to the Korean war provided a legal basis for setting up a “United Nations Command”. In fact, the United Nations had no authority whatsoever over the “United Nations Command”, nor did it provide financial support to it, and the so-called “United

Nations forces” consisted solely of United States troops wearing United Nations caps. More than a half-century had elapsed since the Korean war and, unfortunately, the United States was still abusing the name and flag of the United Nations in order to legitimize the stationing of its troops in the Republic of Korea.

46. The “United Nations Command” in the Republic of Korea, far from maintaining peace and security, was an obstacle to the establishment of a durable peace arrangement in the Korean peninsula. The General Assembly, at its thirtieth session, had adopted resolution 3390 B (XXX), calling for the dissolution of the “United Nations Command”; however, none of the provisions of that resolution had been implemented. The cold war between East and West was over, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had become a Member of the United Nations, a non-aggression agreement had been concluded between his country and the Republic of Korea and an Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had even been established. Therefore, conditions were ripe for implementing the resolution and dissolving the “United Nations Command” at the earliest possible date.

47. **Mr. Skrypko** (Belarus) said that, despite positive changes at the international level since the end of the cold war, peacekeeping operations remained an indispensable tool of the United Nations for settling conflicts. The capacity of the United Nations to conduct those operations and to ensure that sufficient funding was available to that end must be strengthened.

48. His delegation supported the reform proposals made by the Secretary-General with respect to peacekeeping operations, particularly those relating to consolidating the capacity to take timely preventive measures; enhancing the effectiveness of economic sanctions with a view to modifying the behaviour of those targeted, while limiting the collateral damage; developing the post-conflict peacebuilding capacity of the United Nations; broadening cooperation among the departments of the United Nations Secretariat on issues relating to the establishment of peacekeeping operations; and strengthening the coordinating role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in that area.

49. Of all the reform proposals, his delegation accorded priority to measures of preventive diplomacy and, in that connection, stressed the vital role that regional organizations and arrangements could play in early warning and prompt management of conflicts. In any case, the Security Council

must properly coordinate and strictly control peacekeeping operations.

50. Since, in many cases, the timely establishment of peacekeeping operations could save thousands of lives and prevent the collapse of State institutions and the breakdown of law and order, his delegation supported the further development of the standby arrangements and the establishment of rapidly deployable mission headquarters. It also followed with interest the establishment of SHIRBRIG. In that context, he stressed the importance of strict observance of the basic principles of peacekeeping, particularly the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in cases of self-defence, as well as respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

51. The missions in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia demonstrated the importance of drawing a strict distinction between traditional peacekeeping operations and enforcement actions. Peacekeeping operations should be viewed as a temporary conflict-management mechanism and the use of force in carrying them out should be limited to the utmost. Acts of aggression against United Nations and associated personnel in peacekeeping deployment zones gave cause for grave concern. His delegation supported the statement delivered by the President of the Security Council on 12 March 1997 (S/PRST/1997/13), urging Member States and other interested parties to respect the status of such personnel and to take all necessary steps to protect their safety and security. In that connection, he noted that, on 23 October 1995, Belarus had signed the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

52. **Mr. Gorita (Romania)** said that, in the past seven years, his country had participated in various peacekeeping missions by providing troops, staff officers, military police, military observers and field hospitals. Romania had also sent an engineering battalion to the operations in Bosnia and had participated in the multilateral coalition that had conducted Operation "Alba" in Albania. In 1997, within the framework of the partnership for peace, Romanian troops had participated in 18 joint peacekeeping exercises, conducted with various European partners, and in 22 international training programmes. Romanian peacekeeping troops had thus expanded their capacity to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations in that domain.

53. Despite the economic difficulties it was experiencing as a result of its transition to a market economy, Romania had paid the full amount of its assessed contribution to the budgets of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. That

considerable effort on the part of the Romanian Government and taxpayers stood in contrast to the growing delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries. Although there was nothing new about that situation, it was now even more serious than ever and hardly tenable. With the consolidation of democratic institutions in Romania, there was a greater sense that the authorities must be accountable for the use of public monies. In that context, he expressed the hope that the financial crisis of the United Nations would no longer have an adverse impact on those countries that tried to fulfil their obligations in good faith.

54. Although statistics showed a decline in the number of peacekeeping operations, that did not diminish their importance or the duty of the Organization to maintain international peace and security. On the contrary, peacekeeping operations would be as necessary in the future as they had been thus far.

55. Undoubtedly, there was a need for peacekeeping operations to be rapidly deployable. Establishing a credible presence in the early stages of a conflict could prevent its escalation and the loss of human lives. In that connection, his delegation welcomed measures to enhance the rapid reaction capacity of the United Nations. The establishment of rapidly deployable mission headquarters was a very necessary measure in that regard. His delegation had also followed with interest the establishment of SHIRBRIG; it felt constrained to point out, however, that it should not become another select club with special privileges. Various countries or groups of countries could participate in that mechanism with a view to contributing to the efforts of the United Nations. Romania was in the midst of intense preparations for making a solid contribution to the standby system.

56. The reform process in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should continue. His delegation encouraged the Department to reinforce civilian-military integration. Although the decision on gratis military officers had been prompted by the growing concern of a considerable number of States and had been justified under the Charter, it was now necessary to consider with the same energy how the Department's operational capacity could be kept intact and how civilian-military interaction and cooperation could be strengthened at all stages of an operation. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had recognized the particular value to the Department of experienced personnel from troop-contributing countries. It was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would give due regard to that opinion.

57. More substantial consultations were needed between the members of the Security Council and troop-contributing

countries. Furthermore, his delegation wished to draw attention to the Special Committee's recommendation on communications between the Secretariat and potential troop-contributing countries on proposed new operations.

58. **Mr. Holter** (Norway) said that his country, which was a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, stood ready to make significant resources available in the future and fully supported the Secretary-General in his efforts to increase the effectiveness of multi-functional peacekeeping operations.

59. The decision to phase out the use of gratis personnel in the Secretariat must be implemented flexibly so as to avoid creating a situation where the Department was unable to perform its tasks, particularly ensuring the safety of personnel working in the field.

60. United Nations capacity in the area of preventive action and rapid reaction must be strengthened. His country was very pleased that, following a Norwegian initiative taken the previous year, in the summer of 1997 a trust fund for preventive action had been established to facilitate the Secretary-General's activities in the field of conflict prevention. Norway had contributed \$4 million to the Fund.

61. His country strongly supported the establishment of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and had offered to contribute personnel and resources to such a unit. It had also participated, together with the other Nordic countries and other countries, in organizing a Stand-by High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). Its initiative for the establishment of a Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS) would further substantially improve the Nordic countries' capacity to support peacekeeping operations.

62. In the area of preventive action there must be clarity of purpose and coherence between mandate, mission and the resources provided. Command and control structures must be unified, workable and efficient. The members of the Security Council, particularly the permanent members, had a special responsibility to ensure that those criteria were taken into account.

63. Consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries should be developed, and countries contributing substantially with humanitarian personnel should be included in the consultations. His country welcomed the increasing tendency for regional organizations, alliances and multinational coalitions to be given mandates by the United Nations to take on peacekeeping and conflict management

responsibilities in their respective regions and areas of competence. However, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security remained with the United Nations.

64. His country welcomed the fact that the issue of African security was once again on the agenda of the United Nations. His Government was ready to contribute to building peacekeeping capacity in Africa. The United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should play a coordinating role with respect to the efforts in question. In Europe, his country had contributed 800 troops to the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina under a Security Council mandate.

65. His country called on all States to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations under the Charter and pay their assessments on time, in full and without conditions. If peacekeeping operations were to continue to be a vital instrument for international conflict management, Member States must ensure that the necessary financial resources for such operations were forthcoming. It was not acceptable that troop-contributing countries should have to wait years for reimbursements to be made.

66. **Mr. Togusov** (Kazakhstan) said that his country attached great importance to the sustained efforts being made by the United Nations in the area of peacekeeping, since ensuring international peace and security was one of the fundamental aims of the Organization. Preventing conflicts, whether they were internal or between States, called for unswerving attention to possible sources of tension and the immediate adoption of steps to prevent such tensions from escalating into real conflicts. The guiding principles for peacekeeping operations must continue to be the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council, as well as the rules of international law; it was very important to observe the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of States, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

67. His country remained willing to take part in peacekeeping operations. In 1996 it had become the fifty-first Member State to participate in the standby arrangements of the United Nations. It also supported the initiative taken by a number of Member States to set up a rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit, as well as other measures proposed in order to increase and strengthen the rapid deployment capacity of the United Nations. In December 1995, on the initiative of its President, his country had signed an agreement with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan for the establishment and organization of a joint battalion

for peacekeeping in Central Asia under United Nations auspices. On 31 October 1997, Kazakhstan had ratified the agreement on the formation of the Central Asia battalion and the Heads of State of the three countries had signed a joint agreement on the statute of the military contingents for the battalion. In September 1997, the CENTRASBAT-97 joint peacekeeping manoeuvres had been held in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Military units of the Central Asia battalion, the United States, the Russian Federation and Turkey had taken part in the manoeuvres.

68. The establishment of the battalion and the conduct of joint manoeuvres constituted Kazakhstan's practical contribution to the strengthening of stability in the Central Asia region and to United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security. By means of those activities, Kazakhstan was gradually increasing its experience in the area in question, while at the same time fully meeting its peacekeeping obligations in Tajikistan through its participation in the collective forces of the Community of Independent States. With a view to continuing to make progress in that respect, his country called on the United Nations and on States with practical experience in carrying out such operations to provide training assistance to the Central Asia battalion.

69. **Mr. Doudech** (Tunisia) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made on that item under consideration by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Peacekeeping operations were one of the main areas of activity of the United Nations and Member States were agreed in their recognition of that fact. The success of many such operations was a source of pride for the United Nations. However, those operations often ran into practical difficulties and could not succeed unless certain conditions were met.

70. One issue that should be raised was that of the principles on which peacekeeping operations should be based. Before it was initiated or established, any such operation should have the support of the international community and the consent of the parties involved. It was also essential to ensure respect for the sovereignty of States, and territorial integrity and the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. Once deployed, all United Nations missions should fulfil the mandate entrusted to them impartially, without the use of force except in self-defence. Although a particular mission could find itself in a situation where one of the parties to the conflict continued to carry out hostile acts which endangered the lives of the civilian population and impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance, impartiality and the non-use of force would still be essential requirements for the success of that mission.

71. Rapid deployment was another aspect of the question that was worth raising. Various solutions had been proposed, including the system of standby arrangements, in which Tunisia had decided to participate. His Government supported efforts to promote that system and encouraged relationships of association among countries which were in a position to provide assistance so that logistics support would be guaranteed. Such relationships would make it possible to increase the number of participants in that system based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

72. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter represented a fundamental means of strengthening the capacity of African countries in the area of peacekeeping. His delegation supported any initiative which would tend to increase the participation of the African States in peace-keeping operations. It also supported the participation in such operations of OAU mechanisms for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. Based on the results of the Security Council meeting held in September to review the situation in Africa, relationships of association between Africa and the international community should gain new impetus. His delegation hoped that appropriate proposals in that regard would be made in the report of the Secretary-General which the Security Council had requested.

73. The financing of peacekeeping operations must be stressed, as it continued to be one of the major obstacles the Organization faced in that area. It had not yet been possible to establish the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit precisely because of a lack of financial resources. Finally, delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries were still a cause of concern for many States. That problem could impede the participation of certain countries, in particular the developing countries, in future United Nations operations. The only solution was for all States to meet their financial commitments to the Organization in full, on time and without conditions.

74. **Ms. Nguyen Thi Nha** (Viet Nam) said that her delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It welcomed the enlargement of the Special Committee and hoped that it would increase the contribution of Member States to its work. Her delegation also welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 51/218 E, section II of which addressed the issue of death and disability benefits, since it corresponded to the demands for reform and the correction of imbalances and discrimination within the Organization.

75. Her delegation believed that the United Nations had primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that peacekeeping operations continued to be one of the key instruments available to the United Nations in the discharge of that important task. While peacekeeping operations were important to prevent conflict situations from escalating, the aim of the United Nations should be to achieve the peaceful settlement of disputes. Therefore, all means should be exhausted before coercive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter were considered. The use of force should be the last resort and should therefore never be regarded as a substitute for the political settlement of disputes; rather it should be complementary to political means. In that regard, her delegation recognized the utmost importance of the strict observance of the principles and purposes of the Charter, in particular the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a State.

76. Her delegation shared the view of many delegations that the success of peacekeeping operations depended on the observance of the basic guiding principles, namely, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence. In addition, peacekeeping operations should be provided with clearly defined mandates, objectives, command structures and secure financing. Since peacekeeping operations were frequently assigned tasks that went beyond their capacity, there was a need to differentiate between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

77. Her delegation recognized the obligation of Member States to pay their assessments on time, in full, and without conditions, in accordance with the existing special scale of assessments established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3101 (XXVIII) of 11 December 1973, as well as the special responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council. In order to ensure the success of those operations, her delegation stressed the need for consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries and fully endorsed the recommendation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that the Security Council should institutionalize such consultations within its rules of procedure. Finally, she noted the increasing imbalance between the expenses of peacekeeping operations and the resources available for development, and stressed that peacekeeping operations should not be financed at the expense of development activities.

78. **Mr. Kasanda** (Zambia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the

representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It fully subscribed to United Nations peacekeeping operations and recognized their usefulness. For that reason it had made its modest contribution to operations in Angola, Chad, Iraq, Mozambique, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Rwanda. It was also in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations relating to its contributions to the standby arrangements system. It would continue to make its contribution to peacekeeping operations in the firm belief that durable peace was dependent on addressing the root causes of conflict in a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive manner, taking into account the political, social and economic aspects of the conflict.

79. He emphasized the need to establish peacekeeping operations in keeping with the guiding principles of the Charter, especially the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters that were essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a State. Of equal importance for such operations were the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence. In order to succeed, peacekeeping operations must have a clear mandate, well-defined objectives and command structures and secure financing.

80. To date, a solution had still not been found to the question of secure financing for peacekeeping operations. His delegation was concerned about the continued use of the peacekeeping accounts to cover shortfalls in the United Nations regular budget, resulting in the delay of payments to troop-contributing countries, most of which were developing countries. A solution must be found to that problem and the continuation of that practice prevented, which adversely affected equipment and troop-contributing countries. In that regard, he welcomed the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 114 of his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/590). All Member States should pay their contributions in full, on time, and without conditions.

81. He welcomed the logical and peaceful conclusion of the debates on the issue of death and disability compensation, since it had helped to achieve a solution which represented a victory for the equal treatment of all participants in peacekeeping operations. He was also concerned about the transfer to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the functions relating to demining activities, which had previously been under the purview of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. However, he welcomed the assurances of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that such transfer would not adversely affect demining activities.

82. **Mr. Mohammed** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement recently made on the issue under discussion by the representative of Thailand speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. In spite of their limitations, United Nations peacekeeping operations had proved to be valuable instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security in many parts of the world, and would remain an indispensable instrument of the Organization.

83. As a member of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Ethiopia had participated actively in its work, and welcomed the increase in its membership. At its 1997 session, the Special Committee had discussed important issues and had made recommendations on future work in the area of peacekeeping. The Special Committee had reaffirmed the guiding principles of peacekeeping, in particular the need for strict observance of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. Another important recommendation of the Special Committee was the need for systematic consultations between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council. In spite of some progress, that objective was yet to be fully attained.

84. He was pleased to note the important actions taken by the General Assembly on gratis personnel and on compensation for death and disability. With respect to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the Special Committee had recognized the important contribution that regional organizations could make to the maintenance of international peace and security, and had urged that such cooperation should be strengthened in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. In that connection, the Special Committee had underlined the important role of OAU and its mechanism for conflict prevention. While he welcomed the increased consultations between the United Nations and OAU on the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations, much still remained to be done. In that regard, he would appreciate clarification from the Secretariat on the status of the report that the Special Committee had requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its current session on measures taken to strengthen the institutional capacity of OAU, to organize training programmes for military personnel of African countries and to mobilize support to African peacekeeping capacity.

85. He was convinced that African peacekeeping capacity could be considerably enhanced as a result of the participation of African countries in the United Nations standby arrangements. With respect to crises in Africa in particular, the difficulty stemmed not from the absence of standby arrangements, but rather from the lack of political

will in addressing African problems with the same attention and seriousness as crises in other parts of the world. He hoped that more attention would be paid to the efforts of African countries to resolve conflicts on the continent. His delegation fully supported the establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit with an appropriate financing mechanism and transparent working methods for its proper functioning.

86. Although peacekeeping missions in the post-cold-war world had been complex and multidimensional, and in most cases peacekeepers had demonstrated the highest moral standard and integrity in carrying out their tasks, in a few cases, such as the case of the violations of the rights of Somali citizens, they had failed to do so. He hoped that such situations would be investigated and that the United Nations would prevent the reoccurrence of similar acts. In that regard, it was appropriate to consider the question of elaborating a code of conduct for peacekeepers.

87. Ethiopia, in addition to its participation in various United Nations peacekeeping operations, was also actively engaged in regional and subregional peace efforts. Ethiopia attached the highest priority to securing peace in Somalia and resolving other crisis situations in Africa. Therefore, his delegation wished to request greater cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

88. **Mr. Zimmermann** (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that ICRC had continued to devote considerable attention to the issue of the relationship between humanitarian action and political and military action. As far as the safety of the personnel of humanitarian organizations participating in peacekeeping operations was concerned, the best form of protection against violence consisted in adopting an approach which faithfully reflected the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Observance of those principles would guarantee effective and lasting action which was based on the trust of the population and on the consent of the parties to the conflict, as well as on the political will to ensure respect for the relevant rules of international law. As a rule, ICRC did not use armed escorts for the protection of its staff because such escorts tended to increase the risk of confusion.

89. While United Nations peacekeeping operations were in principle carried out with the agreement of all the parties concerned, they were based on very different mandates set by a body – the Security Council – whose role was essentially political. Therefore, it was normal that not all the protagonists should perceive such operations as “neutral”. Moreover, the fact that peacekeeping forces frequently

carried out tasks which had more to do with providing aid to the victims than with keeping the peace created confusion as to the neutrality, independence and impartiality of humanitarian action, which adversely affected the acceptance and even the safety of the staff of humanitarian organizations.

90. It was important to maintain a clear distinction between humanitarian organizations and international military forces. The main task of such forces was to create a safe environment in which protection and assistance activities on behalf of the victims could be carried out. It was therefore important to establish clear mandates and objectives as soon as possible, in consultation with the parties concerned. The roles of the various protagonists should be clearly defined in order to ensure their complementarity; likewise, interfaces should be established to facilitate communication between them. ICRC was pleased to note that similar views had recently been expressed by both the Secretary-General and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

91. Although some headway had been made on the study of the establishment of a general framework allowing humanitarian and peacekeeping activities to be carried out in a complementary fashion, much still remained to be done. To that end, on the occasion of the Twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, the Belgian Government had offered to host an international symposium in 1998 on the relationship between humanitarian action and political and military action.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.



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Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 88: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (continued) (A/52/209, A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1)

1. **Ms. Eshmambetova** (Kyrgyzstan) said that in the past 10 years, peacekeeping had become a crucial instrument for reducing conflict and consolidating peace within the borders of some Member States, particularly in Africa. Some anticipated that there would be increased participation by Member States in the standby arrangements system in the future, while others foresaw a time when peacekeeping would be streamlined and perhaps even reduced. However, the international community must keep in mind that the potential for conflicts between States still existed and that flexible approaches which must be worked out respected the letter and spirit of the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations to address such conflicts.

2. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, which had proved very useful in that context, must be increased. Likewise, the process of consultations between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat must be strengthened and the participation of elements of civil society should be encouraged with a view to gaining their support for the implementation of United Nations decisions regarding peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building. It must be made very clear to the offending parties that the international community stood behind the actions and decisions of the Security Council.

3. Naturally, when faced with a potential conflict, priority should be given to preventive diplomacy, as the most appropriate alternative from all points of view. That would require a strengthening of the United Nations capacity to negotiate and of the Secretariat's capacity to analyse the root causes of conflict. Peacekeeping operations must not only enjoy the trust and confidence of the international community, but they must also have adequate technical and human resources. Her delegation fully agreed with the recommendations and conclusions contained in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/52/209).

4. **Mr. Hrbáč** (Slovakia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. Although the United Nations had succeeded many times in bringing parties involved in a conflict to the

negotiating table, in some cases its peacekeeping efforts had failed for various reasons.

5. Paradoxically, the situation had become more complex after the end of the cold war. Many intra-State conflicts had external repercussions and disastrous humanitarian implications. The fact that the authors of the Charter of the United Nations had not anticipated intra-State instability as a threat to international peace and security, had made it more difficult to decide whether or not the international community should intervene in a particular conflict. Furthermore, there was still controversy over whether or not a humanitarian crisis posed a threat to international peace and security.

6. While, for various reasons, peacekeeping activities had been declining there had not been a parallel decline in the level of conflict requiring international attention. Past setbacks should be examined in order to determine what had gone wrong and thus gain a better understanding of the complexity of current conflicts, with a view to finding solutions to them, rather than being viewed as a justification for diminished political willingness to tackle critical issues through the United Nations. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had done commendable work in that regard. His delegation welcomed the expansion of the Committee membership, and endorsed the proposals, recommendations and conclusions contained in its report (A/52/209).

7. All stages of a peace operation – prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building – should receive the same attention. His delegation thus welcomed the report of the Secretary-General concerning a programme for reform (A/51/950) and the measures proposed therein concerning peace and security. It urged the Secretariat to continue to enhance a system of early warning analysis of potential sources of conflict which would provide the Security Council and other concerned organizations with accurate information and timely advice so that the necessary preventive action could be taken. It was regrettable that the rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit was still not operational. His delegation hoped that the situation would soon be resolved and that further improvements would be made to the system of standby arrangements; his country was ready to participate actively in that system.

8. Current conflicts were characterized by hatred and mistrust, by ruined local economies and infrastructure and by high numbers of refugees and displaced persons. In order to find a durable solution, it was essential to work on peace-building once a conflict had ended; that was not a simple task, as those who had followed closely the situation in the

former Yugoslavia had learned. In order to reconstruct a conflict-torn society, re-establish democracy and respect for human rights and create the conditions that would allow development to resume, the participation of many elements was required, including specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations.

9. Since its establishment as an independent State in January 1993, Slovakia had participated actively in United Nations peacekeeping operations. With over 600 troops serving during 1997 in the United Nations Transitional Administration in Western Slovenia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), and with several military observers in Angola, Slovakia was one of the major troop-contributing countries relative to the size of its population and it was determined to continue contributing to such operations. It supported the proposal that part of the first day of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly should be devoted to a commemoration of those who had served in peacekeeping operations, especially those who had lost their lives under the United Nations flag.

10. **Mr. Gogsadze** (Georgia) stressed the importance and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations for the maintenance of international peace and security. Since August 1993, the United Nations had been maintaining a peacekeeping operation in Georgia in order to resolve the crisis in Abkhazia.

11. There was no doubt about the importance of preventive diplomacy, especially when used in a timely manner, since it covered a broad range of political, economic, humanitarian and, when necessary, some sort of military measures, such as the preventive deployment of forces. His delegation considered it appropriate to establish a United Nations preventive diplomacy centre which would be responsible for elaborating a theoretical and practical framework for the planning, preparation and execution of preventive operations by the Organization.

12. Prevention should comprise two phases, namely, the negotiation stage, and the preventive deployment stage should the negotiations fail. Accordingly, the proposed centre should be able to rely, on the one hand, on a team of negotiators capable of developing appropriate and flexible tactics that could be tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of the region and country where there was a conflict. On the other hand, it should have military and paramilitary specialists who, should the negotiations fail, would recommend the rules and procedures for the use of United Nations forces. Those two units, with the assistance of a small information collection and analysis group, would

try to forecast potential conflicts and would work together should a conflict become inevitable.

13. Until 1988, conflicts were usually between States. Since then, intra-state conflicts, characterized by greater violence and aggressive separatism, a phenomenon which was impeding progress towards democracy and recovery in Georgia and other countries, had been proliferating. In that regard, peacekeeping operations must combine mechanisms involving traditional and not so traditional measures.

14. The time was perhaps ripe for launching peacekeeping operations before a ceasefire agreement was signed, when it became evident that the parties were ready to reach agreement and to begin peace talks. Should one party try to prolong the conflict on the grounds that it was not ready for negotiations, the decision to launch an operation should be taken with the utmost care in order to avoid unnecessary human suffering. The deployment of such an operation should be carried out without compromising the integrity or impartiality of the United Nations.

15. There was no doubt that peace enforcement efforts could be successful only if they were based on clearly defined political objectives and a realistic plan. Deployment should only be a short prelude to negotiations and other political efforts towards a gradual solution to the problem. Thus far, in negotiations the parties to a conflict were usually accorded equal treatment, regardless of whether they were the representatives of legitimate Governments or illegal military groups. That practice was unjustified, since a distinction must be made between officials representing States Members of the United Nations and those threatening the territorial integrity of States.

16. Despite the active involvement of the United Nations in Abkhazia, the 17 resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the 14 statements made by its President regarding the situation in Georgia, 300,000 Georgian refugees were still awaiting security guarantees which would allow them to return to their homes.

17. Peacekeeping operations could be used to prevent the illicit traffic in conventional weapons, which was becoming a major threat to the security of States and to regional stability. The separatist regime in Abkhazia, armed with the most modern small arms, continued forcibly to retain part of the captured territory, preventing a just and prompt solution to the problem.

18. While cooperation with regional organizations offered definite advantages, such as the valuable cooperation in Abkhazia between the peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the United

Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), the United Nations nevertheless had primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. His delegation welcomed the creation and strengthening of the standby arrangements system and the development of a rapidly deployable mission headquarters unit, as well as the initiative on the establishment of the Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG).

19. **Mr. Mahugu** (Kenya) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made on the issue before the Committee by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Kenya was proud to contribute both troops and equipment to peacekeeping operations in various parts of the world. Although peacemaking and peace-building were the cornerstones for ensuring peace throughout the world, peacekeeping operations should be governed by the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-intervention in matters that were within the domestic jurisdiction of a State.

20. The international community's reluctance to support operations in Africa, as in the cases of Rwanda and Burundi, and more recently in Sierra Leone and the Congo, was a departure from the responsibilities of the United Nations enshrined in the Charter. The role of peacekeeping and peace enforcement must remain the responsibility of the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter. Conflicts in Africa must, therefore, be handled in the same timely fashion as those in other regions.

21. While he recognized the need for the involvement of the affected countries and regional organizations in the settlement of conflicts, the involvement of such organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts should not entail a derogation of the responsibilities of the United Nations under the Charter. While his delegation wished to reiterate the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries with respect to the United Nations standby arrangement system, it was concerned about the selectivity of the arrangements relating to the proposed Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG), and called for transparency on that matter.

22. **Mr. Droushiotis** (Cyprus) said that Cyprus was a case study of the relevance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and the necessary components of peacemaking and peace-building. In December 1963, Cyprus had requested the assistance of the United Nations in the face of

the threat of invasion by a much stronger neighbouring country. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) had been established in 1964. In 1965, the Mediator appointed by the United Nations had submitted an exemplary report which, if it had been accepted by all the parties concerned, would have solved the problem at that time.

23. Following the 1974 invasion, the Security Council and the General Assembly had unanimously adopted resolutions demanding respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Cyprus and the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops. UNFICYP had admirably fulfilled its role and had carried out other functions to alleviate human suffering resulting from the military occupation and the artificial division of the island.

24. Twenty-three years had passed, however, and the Cyprus problem remained unresolved. That demonstrated the need for peacekeeping operations to be accompanied by an intensive effort of peacemaking. As long as one of the parties was not willing to comply with the decisions adopted by the international community, and the international community was not able to act effectively to implement the resolutions it had approved, the problem would continue indefinitely. The answer lay not in abandoning peacekeeping efforts, leaving the weak at the mercy of the strong, but in pressing on with the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions by all available means. In the case of Cyprus, the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council included many options, including the adoption of coercive measures against the side which had consistently flouted the wishes of the international community.

25. The occupation troops in Cyprus, instead of withdrawing, had been strengthened and modernized and their military arsenal had reached alarming proportions. In that respect, it should be noted that the acceptance of the proposal by the President of Cyprus for the total demilitarization of Cyprus would be beneficial for all the parties concerned and would contribute to peace in the region.

26. Peacekeeping operations needed stable financial foundations; his delegation therefore reiterated the need for Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time. His Government was voluntarily contributing one third of the total cost of UNFICYP and was currently contributing a third more than its assessed contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

27. The Government and people of Cyprus expressed deep appreciation to UNFICYP to the commander of the Force and to the countries which contributed to the Force for

serving the cause of peace. Cyprus considered it befitting that the General Assembly would be devoting a commemorative meeting at its fifty-third session to mark the fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping operations and remember those who had served in those operations, especially those who had lost their lives under the United Nations flag.

28. **Mr. Mounkhou** (Mongolia) said that peacekeeping operations were an essential instrument for maintaining international peace and security. Although the number and size of such operations had diminished in recent years, post-cold war international developments showed the need for more complex, multidimensional peacekeeping activities in the future.

29. It was imperative to ensure the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including strict observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter, in particular the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters falling essentially within domestic jurisdiction. It was also necessary to ensure full respect for the basic principles of peacekeeping operations such as consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in cases of self-defence. The success of peacekeeping operations depended on their having clearly defined mandates, objectives and command structures and secure financing.

30. Although peacekeeping operations were indispensable, they did not represent the preferred method for achieving durable solutions of disputes since they were undertaken primarily to prevent conflict situations from escalating while efforts to resolve them peacefully were being pursued. It was therefore necessary to stress the importance of preventive deployment and the early resolution of conflicts, which saved lives and reduced the need for the establishment of new and costly peacekeeping operations.

31. Mongolia agreed with the Special Committee that peacekeeping operations should not be used as a substitute for measures to address the root causes of conflicts in a coherent, well-planned and coordinated manner, using political, social, economic and developmental instruments. A broad concept of preventive diplomacy must be applied to achieve durable peace and security.

32. In order to achieve a durable solution of conflicts, long-term programmes aimed at strengthening the foundations of peace were required. In that regard, Mongolia stressed the importance of the concept of the culture of peace, which should integrate various elements such as respect for human rights, adherence to the principles of democracy, freedom, justice and pluralism, acceptance of

differences, and understanding between nations and between ethnic, religious, cultural and other groups. His delegation welcomed the initiative to draft a declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace.

33. **Mr. Sklar** (United States of America) said that his Government was strongly in favour of the initiatives to improve the efficiency of peacekeeping operations, including the establishment of the Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters, and announced that the United States of America had recently donated \$200,000 to the trust fund for that purpose.

34. The United States of America welcomed General Assembly resolution 51/243 on gratis personnel, approved recently. Gratis personnel had provided the Secretariat with critical specialized expertise during times of great need for the United Nations. His delegation recommended that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should conduct a complete review of its personnel, bearing in mind budget limitations, to determine the appropriate positions to be filled by civilian and military specialists in order to implement the resolution. The Department should retain its capacity to plan, deploy and support peacekeeping operations efficiently throughout the transition period.

35. The United States of America was pleased that the Special Committee recognized the important role played by logistics in peacekeeping operations and strongly endorsed new concepts like the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi and the new field asset control system. That system should be the first step in the development by the Department of a comprehensive worldwide logistics strategy.

36. The United States of America recognized its obligation to pay the arrears in its assessments for the financing of peacekeeping operations so that the United Nations could provide reimbursements to the troop-contributing countries. It also believed that the scale of assessments methodology for peacekeeping could be improved. A standardized, equitable scale should be agreed on and implemented. Although the United States of America was prepared to remain the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations, it believed that certain reforms were needed to make the scale truly equitable.

37. **Mr. Matuszewski** (Poland) said that Poland subscribed to the statement made by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and wished to reaffirm its support for peacekeeping operations as an important tool at the disposal of the United Nations for preserving international peace and security. Nevertheless, recent developments had shown that the traditional concept

of peacekeeping did not exactly fit the modalities of action expected from the Organization at the current time. Strict adherence to established principles of peacekeeping had contributed to the growing trend in the United Nations and the Security Council to authorize operations to be undertaken by one or more interested countries rather than the full-fledged United Nations operations based on Chapter VII of the Charter.

38. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations could strengthen the ability of both partners to assist in resolving certain crises. The modalities of such cooperation in the area of peacekeeping should be thoroughly discussed and advantage taken of the experience gained in recent years. In that connection, he wished to recognize the efforts made by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to strengthen the mechanism of conflict prevention and peacekeeping capacity in Africa. He welcomed the closer ties between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the area of peacekeeping and assured the Committee that when Poland assumed the office of Chairman of OSCE in January 1998, it would continue to promote such cooperation.

39. Poland participated in various peacekeeping activities undertaken under the auspices of regional arrangements or organizations. Polish soldiers served with the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and were part of the international peace effort in Georgia. Within two years, the joint Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Lithuanian battalions which had been established for the purpose of taking part in United Nations peacekeeping missions should become operational.

40. Poland welcomed the efforts being made to improve the Organization's capacity to respond more rapidly to emerging conflict situations. The concept of standby arrangements enjoyed increasing support from Member States. While the Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) would soon be operational, more consultations were still needed on the rapidly deployable mission headquarters, especially with regard to funding and to the implementation of the principles of transparency and appropriate geographical distribution of posts. Poland welcomed the growing recognition of the role of civilian police in increasingly complex peacekeeping operations and fully supported plans to include police elements in standby arrangements.

41. His Government noted with regret the threats to the safety of United Nations peacekeeping personnel and stressed the importance of the early entry into force of the

Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. On the subject of the staffing of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, General Assembly resolution 51/243 constituted an appropriate and much-needed basis for addressing the issue. Nevertheless, Poland hoped that the process of replacing gratis personnel would not affect the Department's ability to carry out its functions.

42. Turning to another issue, delays in reimbursements could negatively affect Poland's ability to maintain its current level of contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations. It welcomed the increase in membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. It was important that issues as important as those dealt with by the Special Committee, including the lives of peacekeepers, should be addressed from the broadest possible perspective. By increasing its membership, the Committee had greatly enhanced its strength and authority.

43. **Mr. Yel'chenko** (Ukraine) drew attention to the complex and multi-functional character which peacekeeping operations had acquired in recent years. The effective conduct of such operations required closer integration of political, military, humanitarian and economic actions, as well as collective security efforts at the global and regional levels. At the same time, the lack of clear-cut approaches and adequate instruments and resources impaired the Organization's ability to respond appropriately to the complex nature of contemporary conflicts, which threatened international peace and security. That tendency was the result of not only the critical financial situation of the United Nations but also of the lack of a sufficiently clear conceptual basis. In that connection, Ukraine supported the elaboration and adoption of a comprehensive concept of a political and legal nature on the deployment and conduct of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

44. Ukraine had been participating in United Nations peacekeeping activities for over five years and its participation was currently one of the main priorities of the Government's foreign policy. Nearly 8,000 military and civilian personnel from Ukraine had taken part in more than 10 United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, including elections monitoring. In that connection, he wished to refer to the joint declaration by the Presidents of Ukraine and Georgia, dated 29 October 1997, in which the two leaders confirmed the readiness of Ukraine to participate in the process of peaceful settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, by dispatching a military contingent to the area under the auspices of the United Nations and by broadening its involvement in the activities currently being undertaken there by the United Nations and OSCE.

45. The process of renewal and reform of the United Nations could not be successful without effective strengthening of the Organization's capacity in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, Ukraine noted with satisfaction the increased understanding among Member States of the need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations in the area of conflict prevention, welcomed the constructive initiatives of Member States in that field, such as Norway's proposal for the establishment of a trust fund for preventive action, and commended Norway on its decision to pledge US\$ 4 million to the fund.

46. Ukraine favoured further development of the standby arrangements system. On 6 August 1997, a memorandum of understanding had been signed between Ukraine and the United Nations, pursuant to which Ukraine had already identified the personnel and material resources which it intended to provide for the system. One of the important complements to the standby arrangement system would be the establishment of the rapidly deployable mission headquarters. In that connection, it would be necessary to formulate clear principles and prerequisites for deployment of the headquarters and to ensure that the principle of equitable geographical representation was observed in the composition of such headquarters. Ukraine also welcomed the establishment of the Multinational United Nations Standby Forces High-Readiness Brigade.

47. The safety of United Nations personnel continued to be a cause of concern for Ukraine. Measures to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel should therefore be given priority attention during the planning stages of any peacekeeping operation. In that regard, it was essential for all Member States to consider acceding to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

48. The critical financial situation of the United Nations had made countries like Ukraine hostages to the existing inflexible and ad hoc system for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. It was for that reason that Ukraine had accumulated considerable arrears for the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations. General Assembly resolution 50/224 had started the transition of Ukraine to Group C of the scheme for the apportionment of peacekeeping expenses, even though the provisions of the resolution did not envisage an expeditious settlement of the problem.

49. Ukraine favoured the further development of cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the field of peacekeeping and stressed that such cooperation should always be pursued in compliance

with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and with the principle that no State could arrogate to itself the right to be the main guarantor of peace and security in a region. The successful experience of cooperation between the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, OSCE and other international organizations in the settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina should evolve into a permanent mechanism of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and international organizations.

50. **Mr. Sanoto** (Botswana) said that his country associated itself with the statement made at an earlier meeting by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. His delegation believed that preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building should remain the guiding principles of United Nations peacekeeping, and urged the United Nations to develop and strengthen its early-warning mechanisms so that it could act prior to the outbreak of conflicts. Such mechanisms would not only be cost-effective but would also enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. In that regard, he urged the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to continue to explore practical means of employing preventive diplomacy.

51. Furthermore, the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements could not be overemphasized. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provided for the peaceful settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements, although it clearly stipulated that no enforcement action should be taken by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council. In order to promote peace and stability in the African countries, the international community should use practical, meaningful ways of stimulating the development and democratization of political institutions and structures. Investors must be assured of economic and political stability as a basis for economic development and an indispensable prerequisite for avoiding intra- and extra-State conflicts.

52. In that regard, the international community should broaden its cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and recognize the commendable work done by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in resolving the conflict in Liberia. But while regional and subregional arrangements could make meaningful contributions to international peace and security so long as they had the financial and material support of the international community, they could not substitute for the Security Council's responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

53. The financing of peacekeeping operations was of particular importance for developing countries with limited resources. The financial situation of peacekeeping operations carried out by regional arrangements could only worsen if the debt owed to troop-contributing countries was not paid. In future, that might make those States reluctant to contribute troops and equipment to United Nations peacekeeping operations and to regional and subregional arrangements.

54. **Mr. Ahmed** (Bangladesh) said that his delegation also associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Bangladesh's firm commitment to United Nations peacekeeping activities emanated from the principles enshrined in its Constitution. Since the late 1980s, when Bangladesh had begun its involvement in United Nations peacekeeping activities, it had played a leading role as one of the principal States which contributed troops to those missions, and it hoped to continue to do so in the future.

55. His delegation welcomed the proposals on peacekeeping contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/52/950) and fully endorsed the Secretary-General's opinion, expressed in that report, concerning the importance of preventing crisis situations from exploding into conflicts. His delegation believed that preventive diplomacy was a vital aspect of peacekeeping.

56. His Government supported the concept of rapidly deployable mission headquarters, and hoped that a plan which took into account the views of all United Nations Member States would soon be developed. In the appointment of personnel serving at such headquarters, the principle of parity between developed and developing countries should be observed. Bangladesh was prepared to contribute military and civilian personnel, and supported the establishment of a trust fund to make the establishment of those headquarters a reality.

57. His delegation was deeply concerned at the use of gratis personnel by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It was clear that while developed countries were in a position to provide personnel on an unpaid basis, developing countries were unable to do so. As a result, there was a clear disparity between officials from developed and developing countries in the staff of that Department, an imbalance which must be rectified as soon as possible.

58. His Government concurred with the view expressed by other Member States concerning the reluctance of some countries to pay their contributions to the United Nations

peacekeeping budget. The financing of peacekeeping operations was the collective responsibility of all United Nations Member States. The decision of those countries not to pay their contributions had made it impossible for the United Nations to reimburse troop-contributing countries and, in particular, developing countries and least developed countries such as Bangladesh. In some cases, failure to make such reimbursement had threatened the success of certain peacekeeping operations. It was, therefore, imperative that all Member States, especially the developed ones, should pay their contributions without conditions, in full and on time.

59. There was also a need to eliminate disparities in the payment of compensation for the death or disability of personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions. It was unfortunate that, at present, different scales of compensation were used according to the country of origin of the staff member in question. That anomaly must be removed immediately, and a uniform scale of compensation for death or disability of United Nations peacekeepers must be established.

60. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said he wished to close the discussion on the item under consideration by allaying the fears expressed by several delegations at earlier meetings. First of all, 50 per cent of the need for professional staff in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was met through gratis personnel. While that was a wholly unsatisfactory situation, it would be foolish to believe that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations could dispense with that type of personnel in the near future. The Department was wholly committed to reducing the number of such posts and planned to submit a report on the Department's needs and reorganization, including budget proposals, in the spring.

61. In his nine months as head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, he had, with great satisfaction, become convinced of the quality and integrity of the gratis personnel, both civilian and military, and had never believed that the presence of such personnel had been detrimental to the principles of impartiality and neutrality. In addition, he commended the Assistant Secretaries-General and all the personnel of the Department for their conscientious work and expressed appreciation to all Member States for their contribution to peacekeeping operations.

62. It was clear, however, that it would be preferable to return to a more balanced situation in which all States had the feeling that they were participating fully and that their rights and interests were well represented. As some delegations had pointed out, the question of gratis personnel

could have repercussions on such sensitive issues as procurement and reimbursements to States. Moreover, it was clear that some Member States felt frustrated by the current situation.

63. With regard to the rapid deployment capacity of the United Nations, he had made every effort to obtain financial resources for the voluntary trust fund in order to establish a rapidly deployable mission headquarters, based on consideration of geographical balance. While, regrettably, the necessary contributions had still not been obtained, new proposals for obtaining financial resources for that purpose could perhaps be made in the spring. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that if the use of gratis personnel had been eliminated by then, the rapidly deployable mission headquarters would lack sufficient human resources and would therefore be useless. The initiative would be utilized to re-evaluate the needs of the Department and broaden the representation of Member States within it.

64. The Secretary-General wished to maintain the most active possible cooperation with regional organizations, especially those with which close ties existed. A balance must be sought, however, since regional organizations could not be asked to take responsibility in every area. The United Nations and the Security Council played a fundamental role in the area of peacekeeping and must not abdicate their responsibilities in that regard.

65. With regard to the questions on which various delegations had expressed doubts, he said that the growing importance of the civilian police component in peacekeeping operations reflected new situations, in which instability was very often of an intragovernmental nature, and the success of an operation depended on the evolution of a State's internal situation. With that in mind, what was involved was a capacity which required attention and must be strengthened in order for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to be able to cope with future situations.

66. With regard to the transfer of the functions of the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, he gave assurances that the Unit would continue to pursue its humanitarian objectives and that the humanitarian principles which characterized its work would not be abandoned. Operations would continue to be carried out in close cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system, which would have operational responsibility for demining. What was primarily involved was maintaining a spirit of cooperation and complementarity, not competitiveness.

67. **The Chairman** agreed with the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that it would be unwise for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to dispense abruptly with the services of gratis personnel; he wondered whether a timetable had been developed to phase out the use of such personnel.

68. **Mr. Miyet** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that he would opt for the elimination of posts through natural attrition, which had already begun. That choice meant simply taking into account the expiration dates of the various contracts. Furthermore, the basic needs and future work of the Department would be evaluated in order to determine which posts should be retained. Thus, it might be possible in the spring to convert the posts staffed by gratis personnel into authorized posts, which would be open to nationals of any country. In other cases, the provisions of paragraph 4 (a) and (b) of General Assembly resolution 51/243, which allowed the use of gratis personnel to provide expertise not available within the Organization for very specialized functions or in the case of new and/or expanded mandates of the Organization, would apply. In those cases, the Department would continue to use gratis personnel. However that might be, he hoped that there would be rapid developments in the situation beginning in the spring.

Draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1

69. **The Chairman** introduced draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1 concerning the item under consideration; the sponsors of the draft resolution hoped that it could be adopted without a vote.

70. **Mr. Farghal** (Jordan) drew the attention of the Committee to discrepancies between the English and Arabic versions of the draft resolution which altered its meaning, and requested that the necessary revisions should be made.

71. **The Chairman** said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee preferred not to consider those discrepancies at the current meeting, but to request the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services to prepare a new Arabic text.

72. *It was so decided.*

73. **The Chairman** said that if he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1 without a vote.

74. *Draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.9/Rev.1 was adopted.*

75. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 88.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.



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Summary record of the 18th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 November 1997, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 89: Questions relating to information

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The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Agenda item 89: questions relating to information

(A/52/21 and A/52/455 and Corr.1;

A/AC.198/1997/L.1/Rev.1, L.2 and L.3)

1. **The Chairman** said that at its meeting earlier that morning the Committee on Information had adopted its draft report, which would be issued as document A/52/21, and he drew the Fourth Committee's attention to documents A/AC.198/1997/L.1/Rev.1, L.2 and L.3, which contained the report in question.

2. **Mr. Skrypko** (Belarus), Rapporteur, introduced the report of the Committee on Information and drew the Fourth Committee's attention to the two draft resolutions recommended by the Committee on Information for adoption by the General Assembly. He briefly reviewed the content of the sections of the report and noted that the main thrust of the debate at the nineteenth session of the Committee on Information had focused on the reform of United Nations public information activities, in particular the Secretary-General's proposals for their reorientation. Understanding the need for reform of the United Nations, the members of the Committee on Information had emphasized that the views of the Member States should be sought on any changes in public information activities. Many delegations had pointed out that, for the sake of transparency in the reform process, there should be close cooperation between the Committee on Information and the Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities. It was felt that the reforms should not lead to any shrinkage or elimination of the programmes and activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI) already mandated by the General Assembly before the general membership had been thoroughly consulted on the matter. Many speakers had also stated that before the Department's structure and activities were altered and before it was reorganized into a new Office for Communications and Public Information consultations must be held with the Member States and they must be informed about the reasoning behind any proposals for change.

3. On the subject of the United Nations information centres, many delegations had supported the preservation and strengthening of that important tool of global outreach and had argued against any resource reductions which would impair the information programmes carried out by the centres. Some delegations had supported the integration of the centres with UNDP field offices, but others had highlighted a number of problems which such a move would pose.

4. In the general debate members of the Committee had also stated their Government's dedication to freedom of the press and freedom of information, which were fundamental factors in securing democracy and development. Many speakers had pointed to the continuing importance of establishing a new world information order based on a free and balanced flow of information in a world where the information gap between the developed and the developing countries was constantly widening.

5. During the consideration of the future programme of work some members of the Committee had expressed doubts about its existing working methods, arguing that some of the decisions on substantive issues should be taken in the plenary Committee and not in the group composed of the regional groups, the Group of 77 and China, and the members of the Bureau. However, other delegations had pointed out that the group's work had been conducted in an open and transparent manner, which had ensured the success of its work and the preservation of consensus in the Committee.

6. At its resumed nineteenth session, the Committee had considered the Secretary-General's proposals regarding measures affecting the reorientation of United Nations public information activities; it had also considered the report of the Task Force.

7. Since the Committee had felt that it needed more time to study the documents before it, it had decided to suspend the session to allow for consultations. Following several rounds of consultations conducted by the Chairman of the Committee two draft resolutions had been prepared; they were contained in documents A/AC.198/1997/L.2 and L.3.

8. Since part IV of the report had only just been adopted, document A/AC.198/1997/L.1/Rev.1, now before the Committee, did not reflect the oral amendments made at that morning's meeting of the Committee on Information, he read out the drafting changes to paragraphs 63, 64, 67-70 and 73.

9. **Mr. Sanbar** (Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information) noted that it was generally accepted that information was an essential element for decision-making and mobilizing public opinion. However, a better understanding of the essence of the United Nations and its activities amongst a wider audience could be achieved only by combining efforts on the basis of close partnership. To expand the potential audience, the Organization was using not only its six official languages but also other languages spoken by peoples around the world.

10. The pivotal role that information played in the unprecedented process of reform and the profound changes

which the United Nations was undergoing could not be overemphasized. If peoples did not receive relevant information on what the Organization was doing to improve their lives, support for the Organization would erode. Information work must have a tangible impact on public perceptions of United Nations activities, and the United Nations message must also be heard by non-governmental organizations, the academic community and influential groups in the private sector. In an increasingly saturated information field, it was extremely important for United Nations public information to be of high quality and well focused so that its relevance was clear and understandable. It was necessary to work with the media as potential allies, reacting dynamically to their criticisms and making proactive efforts to clarify issues of serious concern that were placed before the global public. At the same time, accuracy must not suffer. It should not be forgotten that the value of information lay not in what was said, but in what was understood.

11. Mindful of the changes in the outside world, the Department was continuing to examine ways to strengthen the Organization's information capacity in the field by forging links with local communities. In the field, as at Headquarters, the focus must be on the relevance and transparency of the Organization and its responsiveness to the political, economic and social currents of the time.

12. Every information programme and activity must be thoroughly and regularly evaluated, and cost-effectiveness was the key. In recent years, the Department had made conscious efforts to strengthen its professionalism, forge strong media partnerships, develop key audiences, optimize programme delivery and streamline its management structure. As well as developing relationships with the media and non-governmental organizations around the world, the Department was deepening its partnerships with other subdivisions of the United Nations system.

13. Because of the multifaceted and dynamic nature of information operations, Member States needed to play an active role in the team effort of taking the United Nations message to wider, more diverse audiences around the world. The need to generate informed public opinion in support of the United Nations had never been greater, and that daunting task could be accomplished only if everyone took part in the joint effort.

14. The Department currently had a greater outreach capacity than ever before. A number of initiatives in that area had been launched. Thus, for the first time since its creation, the number of accesses on the United Nations home page on the Internet had passed the million-per-week mark

and was continuing to grow. In radio, a successful series of international live broadcasts had been started. A memorandum of understanding had been signed with China to broadcast the Department's radio and television programmes. In television, the weekly three-minute telecast broadcast through CNN and other companies was currently reaching an audience of some 200 million in 106 countries. The United Nations World Television Forum would be important in enhancing the partnership between the Organization and television broadcasters.

15. In the ongoing process of reform, the role of public information had finally gained long-overdue recognition. The Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities had noted the need to place communications functions at the heart of the strategic management of the Organization. As the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/455) indicated in paragraphs 7 to 11, the task of the proposed Office for Communications and Public Information would be to elaborate on the agreed proposals and to implement them in a professional manner. In that connection, it should be noted that, with the active participation of the staff and in close collaboration with the Committee on Information, much had already been done to formulate a dynamic and focused plan of action for information that would meet the ever-evolving needs of the international community.

16. Positive signs of recognition were being given within the Secretariat to the central role of information and communication in the work of the Organization. The Secretary-General had reaffirmed the need to create a culture of communications throughout the Organization, with responsibility for public diplomacy being borne by all senior officials, ambassadors and the larger United Nations family. The Organization's capacity to communicate effectively and meaningfully at the country level through local partnerships must be strengthened. It was also important to strengthen the partnerships with the other agencies in the system, and in that connection he welcomed the fact that the Assistant Director-General of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization was taking part in the meeting.

17. **Mr. Yushkiavitshus** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the two items on freedom of expression and the emerging information society had been high on the agenda of the UNESCO General Conference, which had concluded its work a week earlier. There had been unanimous support for the role played by UNESCO in defending the free flow of information, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and pluralistic and independent media. The General Conference had also endorsed the outcomes of the regional seminars on

a free and pluralistic press organized by UNESCO in conjunction with the Department of Public Information in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Arab region and Europe. The General Conference had underlined the role of free media as an integral part of freedom of expression, which was the cornerstone of any democracy. There had been overall agreement among the participants in the General Conference that freedom of expression was crucial for all the emerging types of information and communication which, as a result of new technological applications, were creating an information society.

18. Referring to article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he said that, in a changing communication and information environment, there was a temptation to introduce controls over access to information or its content. It was important to remember that the UNESCO Constitution provided not only for the free flow of ideas by word and image, but also for the free exchange of ideas and knowledge. The realization of those goals might be hampered only by a lack of political will or repressive attitudes but also by a lack of modern equipment, channels of distribution and professional experience. In order to overcome those obstacles, UNESCO, through its International Programme for the Development of Communication, was seeking to narrow the gap between developing and developed countries. Since the establishment of the Programme, 650 projects had been implemented in more than 100 countries at a cost of \$77 million. Priority was given to developing countries, and UNESCO supported the training of specialists in the fields of communication and information.

19. If information was power, then access to information was the road to empowerment, and that was why UNESCO firmly opposed any attempts to limit the flow of information. During the cold war, it had been proposed that imbalances in information flows should be redressed not by improving such flows but by limiting them; that approach had been embodied in the so-called "new world information and communication order". The sterile political battle had prevented UNESCO from carrying out practical programmes, activities and projects that would have helped redress the imbalance of information flow. UNESCO had overcome that crisis in 1989, when the General Conference had unanimously adopted a new communication strategy, which aimed to encourage the free flow of information and its wider and better balanced dissemination without any obstacle to freedom of expression.

20. The recent UNESCO General Conference had expressed great concern that violence against journalists was widespread and frequently went unpunished. Over the past

10 years, more than 600 journalists had been killed. The General Conference had therefore adopted its resolution 120, which reaffirmed the rights to life and to personal freedom and integrity, the assurance of security and the protection of the law, and freedom of expression were fundamental human rights that were recognized and guaranteed by international conventions and instruments. The resolution also stated that the assassination of journalists not only deprived people of their lives but also was a violation of the right to freedom of expression that limited the freedoms and rights of society as a whole. In that resolution, the General Conference requested the authorities to discharge their duty of preventing, investigating and punishing such crimes.

21. At the end of the twentieth century, the press enjoyed greater freedom than ever before, and it was extremely important to learn how to handle that freedom. Many political groups preached freedom of the press while they were in the opposition. When they came to power, they had to learn how to work with the media, while respecting their independence. Journalists, for their part, had to learn how to strengthen their independence from the authorities. They needed to learn how to use public and private sources of information accurately, and the observance of journalistic ethics was very important in that regard.

22. With regard to the ongoing reform of the United Nations system, the General Conference had emphasized the importance of inter-agency cooperation with a view to maximizing the use of human and technical resources. It was to be hoped that UNESCO, as in the past, could count on the Fourth Committee's support.

23. **Ms. Backes** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, said that the European Union was convinced of the need for the United Nations to retain its unique role in the world. The reorganization of information services and the adoption of a comprehensive communication strategy were important elements of the current reform process, which aimed to strengthen the Organization's role as an active and effective international forum, avoid past mistakes and in the interest of accomplishing tasks in connection with the approaching twenty-first century.

24. The European Union agreed with the conceptual approach and general orientation of the recommendations made by the Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities in its report entitled "Global vision, local voice: a strategic communications programme for the United Nations". One of the recommendations concerned the importance of placing the communications function at the heart of the strategic

management of the Organization. The European Union supported, in particular, the proposal made by the Secretary-General to the Committee on Information on 3 September 1997. On the whole, the European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to broaden the support that the United Nations enjoyed in the world.

25. **Mr. Santaputra** (Thailand) said that there was a need to reorientate the Organization's capacity in the field of communications and public information in order to make it more effective and better geared to targeted audiences. The United Nations should reach out not only to Governments but also to the general public around the world. There had recently been many efforts in that area and it was interesting to note that, in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), the Secretary-General concurred with the recommendations contained in the report of the Task Force on the Reorientation of United Nations Public Information Activities.

26. Thailand supported the proposal contained in paragraph 51 of the Secretary-General's report that all United Nations entities with ongoing missions at the country level, including information centres, should operate in common premises. Such integration should, however, be carried out on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the unique character of each country and the views of the host country. In Thailand, there was probably widespread knowledge about the United Nations among interested government officials, those directly affected, the educated and the English-reading public, but not among the bulk of the general public. The remedy could be found largely in the recruitment of more local staff to work in the information centres. In that connection, his delegation welcomed paragraph 10 of the Secretary-General's report (A/52/455 and Corr.1) and noted that the United Nations could use regional commissions around the world as regional hubs for communication services at the country level in support of communication activities in each country through already existing United Nations information centres, as well as in those countries where there were no established United Nations information centres for their respective regions.

27. **Mr. Moubarak** (Lebanon) said that his delegation had taken note of all the reports that the Secretary-General had submitted to the Committee, particularly the information contained in his report on the work of the United Nations (A/52/1). Information was a means of promoting education and the dissemination of knowledge about various cultures and was a way to strengthen mutual understanding between peoples. The United Nations was at the very centre of all information activities.

28. His delegation agreed that many permanent missions to the United Nations no longer needed postal or facsimile services to transmit extremely important documents to their ministries. That would undoubtedly result in a substantial savings. It was important that national and regional offices of the United Nations should encourage Governments to participate in the implementation of programmes involving the use of new technology. Information played an important role in ensuring support for United Nations activities, particularly peacekeeping. His delegation considered that the use of information technology should become an integral part of peacekeeping activities. Radio broadcasting should also be widely used to disseminate information on the activities of international peacekeeping forces. Information centres should be encouraged to participate in activities in the field in accordance with General Assembly decisions. That would help to strengthen cooperation between various offices, national organizations and other bodies of the United Nations system, in order to promote the Organization's reform efforts.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.